

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## THE ESSENTIALS OF OUR FAITH AND HOPE

### CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AND THE CHRONOLOGY

ON the second page of each issue of this journal, under the title,

#### "To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach"

we have set forth all the cardinal features of the entire Christian system--all the fundamentals that constitute the foundation of our faith and of our fellowship as members of the Church of the First-Born.

*From the beginning of this publication, both the Publishers and the Editorial Staff have been enthusiastic in holding up to the brethren the importance of keeping clearly in mind what constitutes the essentials of our fellowship; and time after time warning has been given against permitting any non-essential or unscriptural test to enter and cause unnecessary disturbance of the holy bond of Christian union and fellowship in Christ. We are continually encouraged by communications from the brethren which assure us of their very deep appreciation of the broad Scriptural basis of our fellowship that we have from the first advocated.*

As the brethren during the year past have taken up the study of chronology, many have come considerably under a test along the line of love and fellowship and as to whether or not they have been willing to abide by the regulations of the Scriptures on this subject; for, of course, in the study of the chronology and lines of thought related thereto wherein there is more or less of complexity and room for difference of opinion, the question at once arises, How shall we treat those who differ with us? Shall we insist that all must see eye to eye on every detail, and shall we begin to condemn those who do not see with us on all points? These questions have led many to examine afresh the principles and fundamentals that should govern in our communion in Christ, with the result that it is clearly seen that the subject of chronology, while one that is entirely proper and profitable for study, is not one of the fundamentals of our faith, and a difference of opinion along this line should not be permitted to cause dissension or division amongst the Lord's people.

That there were errors in some of our calculations regarding events that were expected around 1914 is manifest to all. That our chronological calculations in the past have not been accurate, we must all concede, for the important events looked for have not occurred. But this is no reason whatever for discouragement regarding the essentials of our faith; the evidences still are strong and of convincing character, from the standpoint of chronological data, as well as from the standpoint of events and conditions in the world, that the days of the Son of Man are here; that we are approaching nigh unto the

end of all things and the inauguration of God's Kingdom. More and more we are led to recognize that it is not the exact day or year that is of primary importance, but it is the facts themselves, regarding what is coming and what it will mean to the Church and to the world, that specially concern us, rather than the particular time when these things will come to pass.

### **WHAT BROTHER RUSSELL SAID**

We regard the position and attitude taken by BROTHER RUSSELL in his later years as representing the essence of wisdom on this subject, and we submit the following quotation from his pen and commend it to the most careful consideration of all the brethren:

### **"KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH REGARDING CHRONOLOGY"**

**"A dear Brother inquires, Can we feel absolutely sure that the Chronology set forth in the Dawn Studies is correct?--that the Harvest began in A. D. 1874 and will end in A. D. 1914 in a worldwide trouble which will overthrow all present institutions and be followed by the reign of righteousness of the King of Glory and His Bride, the Church?"**

**"We answer that we have never claimed our calculations to be infallibly correct; we have never claimed that they were *knowledge*, nor based upon indisputable evidence, facts, knowledge; our claim has always been that they are based on faith. We have set forth the evidences as plainly as possible and stated the conclusions of faith we draw from them, and have invited others to accept as much or as little of them as their hearts and heads could endorse.**

**"Many have examined these evidences and have accepted them; others equally bright do not endorse them. . . . Possibly some who have read the Dawns have presented our conclusions more strongly than we; but if so, that is their own responsibility. . . . We neither urge nor insist upon our views as infallible, nor do we smite or abuse those who disagree; but regard as 'Brethren' all sanctified believers in the precious blood.**

***As a matter of fact it [the chronology] was used in practically the form we present it long before our day, just as various prophecies we use were used to a different purpose by Adventists, and just as various doctrines we hold and which seem so new and fresh and different were held in some form long ago; for instance, Election, Free Grace, Restitution, Justification, Sanctification, Glorification, Resurrection. The work in which the Lord has been pleased to use our humble talents has been less a work of origination than of reconstruction, adjustment, harmonization.***

**"Suppose that A. D. 1915 should pass with the world's affairs all serene and with evidence that the 'very elect' had not all been 'changed' and without the restoration of natural Israel to favor under the New Covenant. (Rom. 11:12, 15.) What then? Would not that prove our chronology wrong? Yes, surely! And would not that prove a keen disappointment? Indeed it would! . . . What a blow that would be! One of the strings of our 'Harp' would be quite broken!"**

"However, dear friends, our Harp would still have all the other strings in tune and that is what no other aggregation of God's people on earth could boast. . . . If the Lord sees it necessary for the arousing of the 'Virgins' to permit a false note upon the time bugle, let us take it joyfully as one of the 'all things' working together for good to those who love Him, to the called ones according to His purpose."-Z '13, pp. 374, 375.

"Whether you or we have the *date* correct, we must all agree that the signs of the times, as we read them, indicate clearly that the Master is nigh, even at the door; and that His Kingdom is soon due to begin to take control. . . .

"The general facts are much more valuable and important than merely the day or the year respecting these facts. 'Let brotherly love continue!' Suffer not any dispute over a day or a year to break the most precious bond of love which binds us to the Lord and to all who are truly His. Be *specially* careful on *this point* when the subject of discussion is one respecting which we have no *positive* knowledge. The rupture of fellowship may sometimes be necessary, when 'we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints'--faith in the Divine Plan, in the Redeemer, in the efficacy of His death, etc. These matters are *positively* stated in the Bible--not left to deduction, as in the case of chronology, and all matters based upon chronology."--Z '13, p. 342.

## THE TWO ADVENTS OF THE WORLD'S REDEEMER - PART II.

### "THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME"

*"And I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, having aionian [age lasting] glad tidings to announce to those who dwell on the earth, even to every nation, and tribe, and language, and people, saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; because the hour of His judgment is come.'"*--Rev. 14:6, 7. Diaglott.

THE fourteenth chapter of Revelation is evidently a symbolic description of the Harvest period, beginning with Christ's invisible Presence, and ending with His "Apokalupsis" or open manifestation. In order that we may see who are symbolized by this "angel flying in mid-heaven," and the significant character of the message proclaimed, we will need to establish conclusively that the message is one that is given after Christ's Second Coming has taken place, and at a time before the world is made aware that it has occurred. A careful study of the preceding vision can hardly fail of leading to the conviction that the "Lamb standing on Mount Zion" is a symbolical representation of Christ's assumption and exercise of kingly authority. Literal Mount Zion of old, the place where the typical throne of David was located, is frequently employed to picture this assumption and exercise of Divine authority and power in human affairs this authority and power being vested in Christ.

It seems evident that it is the earlier aspect or phase of Christ's rulership as King, that period in which the Lord's saints are being gathered unto Him, that is referred to by the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. The first act in connection with this assumption of kingly power is plainly stated in the Scriptures to be the resurrection of those members of Christ's Body who had been resting in the sleep of death up to that time--"The dead in Christ shall rise first." The complete Body of Christ is represented as numbering 144,000. Those of this number who are found living, continue to remain in the flesh for a time, and as they finish their course, they experience their change, one by one, to Divine, heavenly conditions,

without "sleeping," fulfilling the words of the Apostle: "For this we affirm to you by the Lord's Word, that we, the living who are left over to the coming [Presence] of the Lord, will by no means precede those who fell asleep, because the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a shout, with an archangel's voice, and with God's trumpet, and the dead in Christ will be raised first; then we, the living who are left over, shall *at the same time* [not the same exact moment but during that same period of His Presence] with them, be caught away in clouds, for a meeting of the Lord in the air."--1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

Those who are "left over" are in the succeeding visions of this chapter (Rev. 14), portrayed as performing a service under the leadership of Christ (who will be present, though invisible) that has an important bearing in connection with the full establishment of the Kingdom in readiness for the world's uplift and blessing. This work is: (1) to declare a message and announce that the time of judgment is come--evidently the great, thousand-year judgment Day; (2) to announce the fall from favor of symbolical Babylon, which at that time embraces all human sects and parties of Christians, both Catholic and Protestant; (3) to give a warning to the Lord's people to separate themselves from the Beast system and its Image, and to be watchful and careful that they keep themselves free from the Beast's "mark." These events are portrayed in the visions that are subsequently recorded in this chapter.

The angel flying in mid-heaven, in harmony with other visions where angels are represented as proclaiming a message from God, we interpret to represent a company of the Lord's consecrated, those who "still remain," during the period of the Harvest. It would therefore seem to be descriptive of an organized movement. The angel's flying in mid-heaven seems to represent a very conspicuous movement. The fact that the message is called, the "everlasting Gospel," is evidence of its being a truthful one. The message was to be proclaimed world-wide with a "loud voice," thus indicating that it would be proclaimed by a comparatively large number of persons, and would be heard all over the world.

One of the very significant features of this vision, and one which, without other assistance, enables us to discover whether the vision has had, or is having its fulfilment, is that this proclamation of the everlasting Gospel is made contemporaneous with the announcement of the judgment Day; and the two are thus indicated as being closely related. We can scarcely avoid the conclusion, therefore, that the vision could not be fulfilled until a full knowledge of what is comprehended in the Gospel, the Glad Tidings, has been made known to those engaged in this movement. This full, clear knowledge began to come some forty years ago, No expositor previous to the nineteenth century ever thought of associating the great judgment Day, as the Scriptures do, with the proclamation of the Gospel, the Glad Tidings. The Glad Tidings of great joy, which is in God's due time to be realized by all people, had been utterly lost sight of, because of apostasy, until the closing years of the nineteenth century, when, in a very special way, it was restored to the Church. We believe, then, that the vision has been in process of fulfilment for some time past. It should be observed that this is a movement which has to do with the proclamation of what the Glad Tidings really is; and that in the great judgment Day the blessings expressed in this proclamation will be realized by all mankind. Other proclamations are described in the visions following this, which in symbol announce the fall of the professed Christian systems from all favor.\*

In connection with these visions St. John heard a voice from heaven giving a specially significant and impressive message. He says: "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying,--'Write--From this time blessed are those dead who die in the Lord.'" (Rev. 14:13.) As this is the first time that death is spoken

of in the Scriptures as a blessing, it is with special interest that we examine its meaning. The language undoubtedly describes the special blessedness of those that die from the time of the vision's fulfilment; that is, from the time of our Lord's arrival and assumption of kingly authority, and on during the entire period of the "Parousia" or Harvest. The words which follow describe what this peculiar blessedness is: "Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works follow them." (V. 13.) Do not these words imply that while they die, their death will not be to *sleep*--not to remain for even a moment in the death state; that while they rest from the weariness of labor, they enter immediately upon their reward, to continue a service in the glorified state, where weariness will be no more?

\*See H-'20 pp. 69, 86, 101, 118 for explanation of these visions.

If this be so, then we have here in the book of Revelation an explanation of that mystery spoken of by St. Paul: "We shall not all *sleep*, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at [during the sounding of] the last [symbolic] trump," which begins to sound at the beginning of the "Parousia." Their glorification follows that of the "dead in Christ" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17); their change occurring not all at the same moment, but "during" the same period of time. As each one finishes his testimony in death, he is changed immediately to be with the Lord and the other members of this heavenly company. Thus it appears that all the dead and living members of Christ's Body will be glorified at (Greek, in) the "Parousia."

We thus briefly refer to this vision now, in order that we may more clearly understand the messages that these last living members of Christ's Body are to proclaim before their glorification. These highly privileged ones are described under the symbol of the three angels in verses 6-12. The first is seen "flying in mid-heaven having aionian [age-lasting] glad tidings to announce to those who dwell on the earth, even to every nation, and tribe, and language, and people;" and also to announce the fact that "the hour of His judgment is come."

These two messages refer to one and the same thing. It is one of the closing messages to be given by the last living members of Christ's Body, namely, that the great thousand-year trial day of the world is about to begin, when all of earth's billions who have never heard the Glad Tidings, and consequently have never been on trial for everlasting life, will come forth from the great prison-house of death, to have presented to them the offer of this priceless boon, under the gracious influences of a full knowledge of God's love in Christ.

It is not that sad and woeful message of the Judgment Day which so many of God's dear people, with their limited views of God's boundless love and grace, have so long pictured to themselves and to others. It is sad enough to think that some even under the gracious influences of the Millennial privileges, will fail to gain eternal life, and will be cut off in the Second Death; but to believe, as many of us in the past have been taught, that these vast multitudes who have lived since Adam's day are to be brought up before the bar of God to receive an immediate sentence consigning them to eternal torment, can be little short of a blasphemy against that Holy Name.

How different do the inspired writers picture the Great judgment! yea, and sing of it, too! Listen to the Glad Tidings of the judgment Day as given by one of these *inspired* men of old:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song!  
Sing unto the Lord all the earth.  
Sing unto the Lord, bless His name;  
Show forth His salvation from day to day!  
Declare His glory among the nations,  
His marvelous works among all the peoples!

Tremble before Him, all the earth!  
Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth;  
The world also is established, that it cannot be moved;  
*He shall judge* the peoples with equity.  
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice!  
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof !  
Let the field exult, and all that is therein!  
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy before the Lord;  
*For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth.*  
He shall judge the world with righteousness,  
And the peoples with His truth!"

--Psalm 96.

The two angels which follow, proclaim, under the symbol of the "fall of Babylon," the complete fall of the professed church systems from God's favor. This clearly denotes that the utter rejection of not only the Papal system, but Protestantism as well, will take place in this Harvest period and be announced by God's true people. Next comes the warning for the true people of God to keep free from these systems, lest they should drink the wine of her false doctrines and incur the wrath of God which is about to begin to fall upon them.--Rev. 14:8-10.

The chapter concludes with a description of the reaping of the earth. How evident it is that a knowledge of the Harvest period is necessary in order to a clear appreciation of Present Truth concerning the deliverance and glorification of the Church and the introduction of the world's great judgment or Trial Day.

## **THE CHURCH'S LAST MESSAGES**

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth."--Isa. 52:7, R. V.

This prophecy similar to the one foregoing, describes one of the last messages to be proclaimed by the last living members of Christ's Body, the Little Flock, before entering into glory with their Head. If it be asked by any, Does not this prophecy refer to the times of the First Advent ? we answer, No; this is a special message concerning the "feet class," the last living members of the Body of Christ. It will be noticed that it is entirely different from that given at the First Advent, or to any given up to the present time, in one very remarkable particular--"That saith unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth!*"

None but the Papacy, and those amongst Protestants who are defiled with Papacy's great error, have proclaimed that the Kingdom of God has been set up on earth, and that Christ has begun His reign. Papacy claims that God is reigning in His representative, the Pope, and in the language of Cardinal Manning, "he [the Pope] must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet," thus applying the prophecy of Christ's Millennial reign to that awful, wicked system. Many Protestants have also claimed that Christ has been reigning in the church, and that He will continue this reign until all mankind have been brought into His fold. Instead of either of these claims being true, the Scriptures declare both these systems to be rejected of God, and doomed to be destroyed in the judgments which close the Harvest period, the end of the Age.

No, this glorious prediction has special reference to the time when the Lord returneth to Zion (the Church). Listen to the inspired utterance which immediately follows as evidence of this: "The voice of thy watchman! they lift up the voice; together do they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when *the Lord returneth to Zion.*" --Isa. 52:8.

As many look over the world today and see the visible church torn by strife and factions, they have come to doubt the language of the Prophet, describing, as it does, such a united testimony--a "lifting up of the voice together," and a "seeing eye to eye" regarding the coming of the King and the setting up of His Kingdom. It is of the Little Flock, of Christ's toiling, suffering ones who are to share the throne with Him, that the Prophet speaks. The time when this will occur will be in the time of His "*Parousia,*" His Presence.

The language of the Prophet goes on to describe the glad times which follow the great tribulation, this time of fiery judgments on the present nations, and social and religious systems: "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."--Isa. 52:10.

### **"BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM"**

"But at midnight there is a cry, Behold the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him!"--Matt. 25:6, 7.

Again, in the parable of the ten virgins, we have given to us by our Lord a picture of the Church in the closing days of her history, covering a period before the Parousia (Presence) *begins*, reaching on through this whole period of the *Parousia* to the time that the overcoming class go into the marriage and are united to the Bridegroom. In this parable we have another special message which is to be announced by some of the Lord's servants to their fellow-servants of the Little Flock.

The parable immediately follows the Savior's portrayal of the two classes of His servants (ministers) who would be living at the time of His arrival, and Presence. The opening words of the parable of the Virgins describe a movement amongst true believers, in the closing years of the Age, just *before* the *Parousia* (Presence); this movement being a revival of the truth of our Lord's return from heaven: "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*" These words teach. an awakening amongst God's Little Flock concerning the *time* of the Lord's Advent.

There cannot be the slightest doubt to the watchers that this movement began shortly after the nineteenth century opened, and culminated in several disappointments. The agitation of this movement and the interest in it continue on in our day. Of this we shall say more later. It is nothing less than the strange (to some) and startling announcement of the *Parousia* or *Presence* of the Heavenly Bridegroom Himself.

Next in the parable we have described a tarrying or waiting time, in which the virgins slumbered and slept; that is, because of the disappointment on account of the non-arrival of the Lord, they failed to go on and acquaint themselves more fully with the important matters of the Advent, and so relapsed into a lukewarm condition about it. That some of the watchers must have continued to diligently study the prophecies, and because of this gained a more intelligent view concerning its *manner, time and object*, is implied in the sudden and significant cry coming from them, just as the tarrying time was passed: "*Behold the Bridegroom? Come ye forth to meet Him.*"--Matt. 25:6, 7.

Let the reader take particular notice that the cry is not, as in the Common Version, "Behold the Bridegroom *cometh!*" but rather, as in the Revised Version: "Behold the Bridegroom!" The word *cometh* is not found in any of the original manuscripts. This cry then is literally, Behold the Bridegroom; He is here! Come now forth to meet Him! It is indeed the first announcement of the Bridegroom's Parousia (Presence); it is the first discovery of the fact that He would not be *visibly* manifested to the world in the Harvest period, or even known to be present by them until its close; neither *visibly* manifested to the watchers who know of His Presence, until their earthly ministry is completed, and they are changed into His likeness!

## **H. GRATTAN GUINNESS ON IMPORTANCE OF TIME PROPHECIES**

WIDE distinction exists and should be recognized between *students and expositors of the Word and Works of God*, who humbly, soberly, and reverently searching into the facts of Nature and Scripture, of providence and of prophecy, reach conclusions which sanctified common sense can approve, and *speculators*, who running away with isolated and mysterious expressions, indulge in imaginations of



their own, and become *prophets*, instead of students of Divine prophecy. No employment of human intelligence is nobler than an adoring investigation of the revealed purposes of God, which things the angels desire to look into, while few are so puerile, as a presumptuous pretence of predicting the future, apart from such cautious and careful study of Divine revelation.

"In conclusion, the author would strongly deprecate the false and foolish popular notion, that all study of prophecy is unpractical--a notion too often propagated by passing, but mischievously-influential allusions to the subject, from pulpit, platform, and press, made by those who know little either of it, or of its effects. It ought to be a sufficient rebuke to the levity that hazards such an assertion, or admits such an idea, to recall the facts, that one-third of the Bible consists of prophecy; and that our Lord and Master said, 'Search the Scriptures,' not a portion of them. The Apostle Peter expressly tells us that we *do well to take heed* to the 'more sure word of prophecy,' as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise. Is it unpractical to make use of a good lantern on a pitchdark night, in traversing a dangerous road? or is it not rather unpractical and unreasonable to attempt to dispense with it? And further, a special and emphatic blessing is attached to this study in the closing, book of the Bible: 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein, for the time is at hand.'

"It is a reflection of the gravest kind on the wisdom of God, to suppose that the study of a branch of truth to which He has in His Word accorded singular prominence should have an injurious tendency, or be devoid of a directly sanctifying effect: and moreover, it is a conclusion completely at variance with all the facts of history and experience. Enoch was a student of prophecy and of prophecy that is to this day unfulfilled, and Enoch was the saintliest of men, an eminently holy and practical preacher, who walked with God three hundred years, and was not, for God took him, and before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Noah was a student of unfulfilled prophecy, and Scripture presents no more practical preacher of righteousness than he was. All the holy prophets were students, and diligent students, too, of their own and each other's predictions, and *especially of their chronological predictions*. 'The prophets inquired and searched diligently, searching what or *what manner of time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow.' (1 Pet. 1:10, 11.) Daniel was a student of unfulfilled prophecy, yet he was not only a practical statesman, but a man of singular holiness, classed with Noah and Job as one of the *most* righteous of men.

"There is everything in the nature of the study to make those who pursue it both practical and holy. It imbues the mind with the counsels and judgment of God about the affairs and events of earth; it reveals what *shall be*, and thereby lessens the inordinate power of that which is *now*, bringing the spirit under the influence of things unseen and eternal, and thereby weakening that of things seen and temporal. It affords to hope much needed food, lacking which we must languish and grow feeble; and to faith and love peculiar stimulus and enjoyment. Without an intelligent acquaintance with the teaching of the prophetic Word, no man of God is or can be thoroughly furnished to all good works, for it is part of the 'all Scripture' given by inspiration, and profitable for the purpose of rendering him so.

"Perhaps one reason for the prevailing neglect of prophetic expositions and preaching will be found on reflection, to lie, *not* in the fact that it is *unpractical*, but rather in the fact that it is so *peculiarly practical*, that few have the boldness and courage to face the ridicule, opposition, and contempt it is sure to incur in the world. Jeremiah lived on the eve and in the crisis of a day of judgment on the

apostate professing people of God. He was commissioned to deliver prophetic discourses full of denunciations of coming judgment, and of *chronological statements of its proximity and duration*. We know what Jeremiah's lot was, and few are prepared to play *his* sad and thankless role in society !

"So far from the study and exposition of the prophetic Word being profitless and vain, we believe it is impossible to estimate the loss sustained by the Church, or the injury done to the world, by the very general and unjustifiable neglect of it. Is it not so that where one prophetic discourse is delivered, ten thousand doctrinal and practical sermons are preached? *By what authority do we thus shelve a line of truth to which Divine wisdom has given such prominence in Scripture?* Is it not our duty to declare '*the whole counsel of God*'? Those who have carefully looked into this subject, solemnly and with good ground believe, that the 'Word' we are commanded to 'preach' is full of evidence that the long predicted and long delayed judgments on the Papal and Mohammedan powers, which are not only already begun, but are fast accomplishing before our eyes, are to issue, and that speedily, in such a burning of 'Babylon the Great,' as will light up all Christendom with its lurid glow,--the immediate precursor, if it be not the accompaniment, of the glorious advent of the King of kings. With all earnestness and sobriety of mind they assure their brethren that it is their deep conviction that *this is the testimony of sacred Scripture*. . .

"For if we are right--if there be unequivocal proof in the inspired volume, proof that no previous generation of Christians was in a position to appreciate as we are, that the day of Christ is at hand--that the time for evangelizing the nations, and gathering in the church of the first-born is speedily to expire--that the long day of grace to the Gentiles is all but over, and that apostate Christendom, so long spared by the goodness of God, is soon to be cut off by His righteous severity that the mystery of God is all but finished, and His manifested rule about to be inaugurated--that the great closing Armageddon conflict is at hand, and the complete overthrow of the confederated hosts of evil--if we be right in believing that scarcely a single prophecy in the whole Bible, relating to events prior to the second advent of Christ remains unfulfilled--if *we be* right,--then surely every pulpit in England should be ringing with timely testimony to these truths,--surely these solemn and most momentous facts ought not, in the preaching of any of God's faithful witnesses throughout the world, to be passed by in silence. And who that has not *studied* the subject can be in a position to say that we are *not* right--that these things are not so?

"May such a spirit as the Bereans had of old be granted to the Christians of this generation, that they may diligently search the 'more sure word of prophecy,' and draw directly from that sacred fountain the Truth *as to the fast approaching future*, which God has graciously revealed."--*The Approaching End of the Age*.

## **"FINALLY, BE ALL OF ONE MIND"**

*"Finally, be all of one mind [harmonious--in accord], having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."*--1 Pet. 3:8, 9

[Reprint from Pastor Russell]

HARMONY does not mean alike-ness. Rather it signifies unity with diversity: and this is the meaning of the Greek word translated "of one mind" in our text. The Lord's will respecting His people does not contemplate exact sameness, wholly ignoring individual characteristics and peculiarities; on the contrary, a diversity with harmony is more desirable than a sameness; as, for instance, it is the harmonious union of the seven colors that constitutes the beauty of the rainbow. So also in music: one strikes a chord on the piano or the organ and the result is harmony, oneness, union--the variety of the notes gives a melody which could not be obtained from any one of them, or from a sameness of equal volume. This is the thought the Apostle's words give us in respect to God's people; they are of various natural temperaments and dispositions and peculiarities, and the Divine alchemy by which the human is transmuted into the spiritual, the old mind into the new mind, does not wholly destroy, and is not intended to destroy, the elements of character and disposition; but is intended to take from each one its dross and imperfection and discordancy, and thus to permit all eventually to unite in and develop into a harmonious whole.

The Lord does not expect, however, that this condition of complete harmony will be attained by His people the instant of their consecration. On the contrary, as the Apostle indicates in our text, this attainment of harmony is the result, the glorious consummation, rather than the beginning of the work of grace in the Lord's people: he says, "*finally*," not primarily, we are to be all of one mind--harmonious. It requires long years, generally, in the school of Christ, for His disciples to so grow in grace and in knowledge and in love, ere they reach the glorious condition expressed in our text, even "*finally*."

The Apostle Paul intimates that we are to continue so to grow in grace and in knowledge, and in love, as to attain in heart, in will, the stature of a perfect man in Christ. The "babe" in Christ has not the stature of a "man," and requires first the milk of the Word, and subsequently the "strong meat," that it may grow thereby, and finally attain to the ideal condition represented in our text--a condition of harmony with the Lord and with each other, which indicates that the work of grace has well progressed--that the mark of perfect love has been well attained in the heart, even though it be not possible still to fully express it in every word and act of life.

The Apostle Paul describes this transformation of life, this growth, saying, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind;" but while it requires only a short time to give this instruction, and does not require long to agree to follow the instruction, it does require patient perseverance in well-doing to comply with the instructions--to fully attain to the transformed conditions even in our hearts, so that we will aright, however difficult it may be for us to always do right. And here arises a difficulty: many do not clearly see just what are the requirements, and hence go through life in a maze, in perplexity, in doubt, in fear, lacking the rest and peace and blessing which should come from a proper understanding and a consistent endeavor.

No doubt all have been struck with the fact that those who manifest the deepest interest in the Divine Plan are not always the most smooth and most agreeable people in the world: frequently they are so combative as to be continually distressing both themselves and their friends by their unwisdom or their disposition to wrangling and contention. The very quality which the Apostle mentions in this text as like-mindedness or harmony is peculiarly lacking, naturally, in the disposition of the majority of those

who become deeply interested in Present Truth. And some have been inclined hastily to condemn the doctrines and to say, This is not the peaceable spirit of Christ. Where the spirit of Christ is there should be love and harmony. So says the Apostle: "*Finally*, be ye all of one mind." And this should be borne in mind as being the final result of discipline and instruction in the school of Christ; by our attainment of this disposition to harmony (while at the same time loyal and courageous for the Truth), we may safely gauge our growth in grace, knowledge and love.

We want to suggest an explanation as to why it is that so many of the Lord's people are combatively disposed. A wrangling and contentious disposition is the result of large combativeness--misdirected--unwisely exercised. Combativeness itself is not a bad quality. On the contrary, it is a good quality--a quality actually indispensable to the attainment of the prize set before us in the Gospel. Those who lack combativeness, lack backbone; lack the ability to walk an upright life, under present conditions; they are like a boat on the river which has neither oars nor wheel nor screw-propeller. They can do nothing but float with the current, for they lack the apparatus necessary to stem it. There are many goody-goody people who lack firmness, lack character, lack combativeness, and who could not think of anything else than floating with the popular current; and these frequently are mistaken for "saints" when they are nothing of the kind. They are not even of the kind of material that the Lord takes to make "saints" out of. They are unfit for His purposes under the present call of this Gospel Age; for all who are called now to be of the elect Church are called to be "overcomers;" called to be victors; called to stem the popular tide; called to fight a good fight of faith and obedience; and such as are totally lacking in firmness, in combativeness, in character, cannot possibly comply with these conditions, and are not in the race.

So then, if any of those who have grasped the Truth, and who have been grasped and drawn by the Truth to consecration to the Lord, have at times felt the perversity of their natural dispositions--their combativeness, contentiousness and wrangling disposition--and felt discouraged on this account, let them thank God and take courage. Let them realize that this very disposition constitutes one qualification for enlistment and service under the Captain of our salvation;--although such a service will mean the bringing of this contrary disposition into accord with the spirit of love, which, in the end, will mean that the wrangling disposition will be subdued, and the combativeness be properly turned to good account in another direction.

But while taking all the encouragement we can from the thought that the Lord is wishing and is seeking and calling out a fighting class of "conquerors," who could not be conquerors unless there were something to conquer, and who could not conquer unless they possessed something of the conquering or combative disposition, let us, nevertheless, promptly take ourselves in hand, realizing that the good quality of combativeness has in every instance been misdirected, and that from the moment we enlist as soldiers of the Cross of Christ, our combativeness is to be turned into new channels. We are to learn, first of all, that our combativeness is not to be exercised toward the Lord, that we should resist His will; but that, on the contrary, we are to make a full surrender to Him of our thoughts and words and conduct. We are to remember that combativeness is not to be used toward the brethren; for to fight against the brethren is to fight against God, against the Truth, against the fellow-members of our own brigade. Instead of fighting against the brethren, we are to love them, and to fight for them, even as we are to fight for the Lord and for the Truth. We are to remember, too, that our combativeness is not to be exercised against our friends, our neighbors, or the world in general. No; all of these have plenty to

contend against without having our opposition. On the contrary, they need our sympathy, they need our help, they need our encouragement, they need whatever we can render them in the way of uplift.

## **FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH--1 TIM. 6:12**

How, then, and against what shall we exercise our combativeness, that it may be well directed to the Lord's pleasured and in the service of His cause? We answer, that our combativeness is to be turned against sin, and that its first exercise must begin with ourselves: the battle with self is the greatest battle, and we have the Lord's Word for it that he that "ruleth his spirit [his own mind, will] is better than he that taketh a city," because he has to that extent learned to exercise the combativeness of a true character in the right direction, in self-control. It is after we have had considerable experience in battling with sin and selfishness in ourselves, in casting the beam out of our own eyes, in subduing anger, malice, hatred and strife in our own hearts and flesh--it is then, and by means of this severe battle and experience, that we will be prepared to assist the brethren, and to assist our neighbors in their difficulties--to help them to overcome their besetments and weaknesses.

Whoever starts out by fighting even the sins of others before he has made a vigorous campaign against his own weaknesses and errors, is making a mistake. He needs humility, and sympathy to assist the others to fight their battles, and this he cannot gain without first battling with himself and learning to appreciate how strong is the foe to be contended with, and how thoroughly entrenched is sin and selfishness in all the avenues of the flesh. He even needs to be worsted in some of his battles with self in order to have a clear appreciation of his own inability to overcome and to force him to go to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help. He needs this because, as the Apostle says, it is when we are weak that we are strong; and when we are strong in our self confidence, and therefore neglect to go to the Lord, then we are weak and liable to make failure in the battle, and to be overcome by the enemy--Sin.--Heb. 4:16; 2 Cor. 12:10.

All those who have had any experience in the matter, and who have learned how and where to direct their combative energies, find that there is full scope for the exercise of every particle of combativeness he possesses. (1) In himself, continually; as the Apostle expressed it, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:27.) O, how much of energy and how much persistency in fighting the good fight of faith, and of loyalty to the Lord, is needful in the conquering of self--"bringing every thought [and so far as possible, every word and act] into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) Plenty of room here for combativeness; plenty of room for all the contention and wrangling we want--contention with sin and self-will, wrangling with the will of the flesh and opposing it at every step--mortifying it, killing its affections and desires. No wonder the Apostle speaks of these present experiences as a fight; no wonder he tells us that we must be prepared to endure hardness as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) As soon as the victory over self has been gained, and as soon as the new mind has put a garrison in every quarter of the conquered body, to guard it from rising in insurrection, to hold it in subjection to the King of kings and Lord of lords--forthwith all the remaining energies that can be spared from self-control will find ample opportunity for usefulness in battling for the Lord, battling for the brethren,

battling for the Truth, battling against error, battling against all the wiles of the devil, "for we are not ignorant of his devices," as the Apostle declares.

(3) As the eyes of our understanding get opened wider and wider, we see the great conflict that is progressing throughout the world between righteousness and sin, between our Lord and the god of this world and his blinded representatives, who ignorantly think that they are doing God service and are often found fighting against the Truth and against the true soldiers of the Cross, their brethren, even as in the case of St. Paul. We remember how he, as Saul of Tarsus, persecuted the Church, mistakenly misusing his combativeness in a wrong way. We remember how the Lord called to him in the way, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"--Why are you fighting against God, opposing the Truth and His cause? In Paul's case we see how that as soon as the eyes of his understanding were opened he became a most valiant soldier of the cross, hesitating not to lay down his life in the service of the Lord and the brethren, whom once he had ignorantly opposed.

It was the same combativeness which made Paul a violent persecutor that subsequently made him the most valiant of the Apostles in the defense of the Truth. And so it was also with others of the Apostles. Those who had the largest amount of combativeness naturally, when it was turned into the proper channels, became thereby the strongest and most valiant for the Truth. Peter, for instance, full of combativeness, and at first seriously impeded by it, ready in defense of the Lord to smite off the ear of the high priest's servant, was very valiant subsequently in the use of his talents to the Lord's praise. James and John, two others specially favored and recognized of the Lord, and specially used in the service of the Truth, were of combative dispositions, so much so that they were known as the "sons of thunder;" and it was these two who were so incensed at the Samaritans who refused to receive our Lord into their city, and who were so full of love and zeal for the Master that they inquired, "Lord, wilt Thou that we call down fire from heaven to consume these men and their city?" They had the combativeness, they had the courage, they had the zeal; but they had not yet learned how to direct it, and so the Master intimated, when He said, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." By and by, when they were anointed with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and had learned gradually what spirit they were of (what spirit the Master was of, and what spirit they must be of as His disciples), they understood better how their combativeness and zeal were to be used. And hence we find them loyal soldiers of the Cross, shunning not danger, enduring hardness as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus, even unto death.

It was this natural combativeness consecrated to God, and rightly directed through the Spirit, that led Peter and one of the others, when threatened, and charged straitly by the Sanhedrin that they should preach no more in the name of Jesus, to courageously withstand this illegal restraint upon their liberties and rights as Jews, under the Law, and to be obedient to the voice of the heavenly call, and to declare, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20.) The Lord knew whom He was choosing for His Apostles, and we see clearly that weak, vacillating, nerveless men would not have served the cause as did these whom Jesus chose. And it is but reasonable that we conclude that the Lord similarly throughout this Age, is seeking for and choosing strong characters, those who dare to do right; who dare to incur the frown of the world and its slights and sneers, its scoffs and its jeers, its persecution because of fidelity to the Lord and to the brethren. This is overcoming; and to whatever extent any realize that they are deficient in these qualities let them cultivate this combativeness in this

proper direction to combat weakness, combat sin, combat subserviency to those things which are contrary to the Lord and His Word.

### **FAITH AND THE MESSAGES ALSO ESSENTIAL**

But combativeness alone would not be sufficient, It needs proportionate faith, in order to use the combativeness aright. Hence we hear our Lord's word, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Faith in the Lord must be the power that will move His people and energize them. Not faith in creeds, nor faith in men, nor faith in ourselves, but faith in the Lord and in His exceeding great and precious promises. As the steamboat wheels represent its combativeness, by which it battles against and pushes the water, and thus is enabled to go up stream, so its steam-power, through the engine, represents faith, which must be behind the combativeness, to exercise the combativeness--to lead us to endure hardness, to direct us in fighting the good fight and to hope for the rewards to be attained.

Similarly the fuel and the boiler generating the steam represent the Word and providences of God which produce in us the cause, the power of the faith which energizes us in stemming the current. The exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word were given to us as the basis of faith--as the fuel to produce the power in us to will and to do God's good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13.) And hence these gracious promises must not be neglected; they must be continually used and must continue in us to energize us. And the energy must be applied, and we must progress proportionately against the course of this world, if we would attain to the glorious conditions to which we have been called.

While we should ever remember (lest otherwise we should be discouraged) that the attainment of a control of our own spirits, our own minds, and the bringing of these into full accord, full harmony, with the Lord and, so far as possible, into accord with all of the Lord's people who are in accord with Him, is to be "finally;" nevertheless we are not to delay our endeavor to reach that final and grand development to which the Apostle exhorts us in our text. We are to have it continually before us as the standard, the ideal, the aim, and although we may fail time and again, if we are rightly exercised in the matter we will be stronger as the result of every failure; for each failure will show us more clearly than we discerned previously the weak points of our character naturally resulting from the fall. And if each weak point be carefully noted and guarded against as respects the future we will come by and by, by the grace of God and under the direction of our great Teacher, by His Word and example and providential leadings, to that subdued condition, that harmonized condition, which would accord to the expression of the text. And to such, looking back, even the failures which subsequently recognized led to greater fortification against the wiles of the Adversary and the weaknesses of the flesh, may be seen to have been overruled by the Lord for our blessing according to His promise that all things shall work together for good to them that love Him.

As we *finally*, in larger and larger measure, attain to harmony--to the subduing of our natural dispositions toward contention, gradually getting these combative tendencies into accord with the Lord and His Word and His Spirit, and into accord with those who are His, our fellow-soldiers in this battle for the right, our condition will be what the Apostle here describes; viz., we will have compassion one of another. We will expect to see and will see "the brethren" striving for the mastery over self and we will be sympathetic, compassionate; so that if they err through weakness of the flesh, we will be glad to

restore such in the spirit of meekness, remembering ourselves also lest we should be tempted. (Gal. 6:1.) We will love them as brethren ought to love--heartily, thoroughly--such a love and such a sympathy, such a compassion, as would lead us to do everything within our power for their assistance--especially along the lines of spiritual assistance, in the conquering of sin, and in growth in grace and knowledge and love; but, nevertheless, also in temporal matters as we have opportunity, as may be possible to us.

This compassion and brotherly love amongst the spiritual brethren, even as respects temporal matters, cannot surely be less than it would be amongst natural brethren. Indeed, inasmuch as the spiritual relationship is the higher, the nobler, the grander of the two, without detracting anything from the love and affection and obligations toward the fleshly brotherhood, it would imply that the spiritual would appeal to us still more strongly, so that we would do all for a brother in Christ in a temporal way that we would do for any earthly brother--and more abundantly. The Apostle sets this standard, saying, that we are to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith."

This of course does not mean that we are to be negligent of those of our own immediate households and our special responsibilities to these; but it does mean that aside from these, the spiritual brethren should have the first place in our hearts and in our sympathies and in our love, and in all that this would imply in the way of sharing with them both the spiritual and the temporal good things which we enjoy, according to their necessities. Those who have reached this condition of heart-harmony with the Lord and with His gracious Plan will have had such an experience in attaining to this position themselves that it will make them pitiful of others--sympathetic in the difficulties and trials of others; and it will make them "courteous," polite, "gentle toward all."

In a word, according to the Scriptural standard, the elect Church of Christ should be the most polished, the most refined, the most polite, the most generous, the most kind, of all the people in the world; and should be all these in the most absolute sense; not in the mere sense of an outward form and appearance of kindness, gentleness, etc., so common in the world; but a gentleness, a kindness, proceeding from the heart, proceeding from an appreciation of the Lord's spirit and the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of love, and the spirit of justice, also. It is a great matter that we learn to be thoroughly just, and in all of our affairs to do unto others as we would wish them to do unto us--that we accord them the same liberties that we ourselves would wish to enjoy. Truly, the law of God is a wonderful law, and truly the people who are taught of the Lord and trained in harmony with the Divine will, must be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Combative people will always (while in the flesh) feel a disposition to retaliate; but those who have learned of the Lord the lesson of self-control, and who have developed meekness and brotherly-kindness and pity, will thereby be prepared to fulfill the demands of our text--to not render evil for evil, or railing for railing. And looking to the Lord as the pattern they will see how it was with Him, that "When He was reviled He reviled not again." Not because His enemies had found in Him something that could properly and justly be reviled and evil spoken of;--nor because His enemies were so nearly perfect that He could find nothing in them to revile and speak evil of; but because He was so full of submission to the Divine will that He was enabled to take the scoffs and railings of the people, and to bear these humbly and patiently, and to remember that *even hereunto He was called*, that He should endure patiently and learn the lessons, and prove Himself faithful, and develop and demonstrate



His true character, and feel and manifest His pity for the people, in their blindness and ignorance, and His love for them.

And so it must be with us as we grow in our Lord's character-likeness. We also will be less disposed to rail at those who rail, and to revile those who revile us. We also will be ready to suffer the loss of all things, and to do so with cheerfulness; yea, even to rejoice in the trials and difficulties of this present time, knowing, as the Apostle declares, that these are working out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. We note here the harmony between Peter's statement of this matter and our Lord's statement of it: "Bless them that curse you; bless and curse not." (Phil. 3:8; 2 Cor. 4:17; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:14.) So the Apostle says we should rather render blessing. If we have not yet attained to this high standard which is at the end of the race, the mark of perfect love, where we love our enemies and are ready and willing and anxious to bless them, to help them, to desire their uplifting out of darkness and degradation, and to wish and do all that we can in harmony with this, the Divine Plan, let us not be discouraged; but let us press onward, that as soon as possible we may reach this point, which is the mark of perfected character. For, as the Apostle says, "even hereunto we were called, that we might inherit a blessing."

### **THE BLESSED INHERITANCE FOR WHICH WE ARE BEING PREPARED**

We were called to be the Royal Priesthood, under Jesus, the Royal High Priest of our profession. We are instructed in the Scriptures that this Royal Priesthood is to be God's agency during the Millennial Age for bringing blessing to the world of mankind, and "hereunto we were called" that we might be fitted for this priesthood. The Apostle tells us that in the preparation of our Lord Jesus and His testing as to fitness for the position of High Priest, it was necessary that He should be tempted, tried, and caused to suffer, in order that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest when the time should come to exercise the authority and power of His office. Similarly it is necessary that all who would be of this Royal Priesthood should have such experiences now as would develop in them also these principles of truth, righteousness--such experiences as would lead them to love righteousness and to hate iniquity--such experiences in battling with self and in gaining control (at least so far as the mind, the will is concerned), as would constitute them victors and develop in them these graces of the Spirit mentioned by the Apostle, brotherly kindness, pitifulness, compassion. All these qualities will be requisite in dealing with the world during the Millennial Age. They will be merciful and faithful high priests, *because* they will know how to sympathize with the poor world in its fallen condition, and how to make allowances for them in their various efforts toward regaining the standard of perfection then to be established through restitution processes.

We will be kings as well as priests then. As kings, we will be endued with power to control the world. This will be a further proper use of combativeness; but we are not fitted and prepared to so control the world in the present time; and therefore the Lord directs His people to wait, and long for, and pray for His Kingdom to come, and His will to be done--to be enforced with heavenly power and authority. These "very elect" kings and priests will be fully qualified to exercise their power in moderation, for then they will have the new bodies in perfect accord with the new minds--the new minds which are now being developed, disciplined and brought to that standard of perfect love, which is full of pity, compassion, brotherly kindness and harmony. How necessary, dear brethren, that we learn these

lessons, if we would be prepared to be used in the glorious service of the Kingdom so shortly to be established.

## **THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI**

**--SEPTEMBER 17--MAL. 3:1--4:3--**

*Golden Text.--"Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts."--Mal. 3:7*

AFTER the events that we have studied, Nehemiah was recalled to the Persian court, but returned to Jerusalem after a few years and seems to have governed the city for the rest of his life.

Malachi the prophet spoke for and represented Jehovah to the returned Israelites. His prophecy is supposed to have been written during the time of the absence of Nehemiah, the governor, at the court of the king of Persia. The interim of his absence is thought to have been one of religious declension, as the record shows a considerable stirring up and setting in order again after his return. Malachi's prophecy, therefore, may have served a double purpose--first to reprove and stimulate the people of that time, and secondly, and much more important, to give a general lesson applicable all the way down through the more than twenty centuries since. His prophecy is the last one of the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures, and closes with exhortations and promises respecting the coming of Messiah, for whom the Jewish people had at that time waited for more than fifteen centuries.

Verse 1 of chapter 3 is the key to this lesson. The Messenger whom Jehovah would send is the Christ--not alone the man Christ Jesus, who was pre-eminently the Divine Messenger, but inclusively the whole Christ, the Church, the Body, the underassociates, with Jesus the Head. As we have already pointed out, this Messenger appears in the two following capacities: First as the suffering one, the sacrificing one, and secondly as the anointed, glorified one, the King, the restorer. The work of suffering belongs to this Gospel Age, the reign of glory belongs to the Millennial Age. The suffering began with the consecration of our Lord and Master at the time of His baptism into death. The three and one-half years of His ministry were so much of His delivering Himself into death or baptism into death, and that personal sacrifice was finished at Calvary. During this Gospel Age, in harmony with the Divine Plan, our Redeemer has accepted a Little Flock from the world upon their renouncement of sin, their acceptance of Him as their justification, and their consecration of their little all to His service, "to be dead with Him that they might also live with Him, to suffer with Him that they might also reign with Him."

Throughout this Gospel Age this overcoming class, the Church, has been faithfully laying down, sacrificing, life and earthly prospects and interests because of their love for the Lord and for the principles of righteousness which He represents. Thus this entire Gospel Age has been one of suffering. As stated by the Apostle, the Prophets foretold the "sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow." (1 Pet. 1:11.) The glory of this great Christ, Head and Body, cannot be ushered in until all of its sufferings are at an end. Hence, as the Apostle urges, it is for us to appreciate the situation and understand our privilege to "suffer with Him," or "to be dead with Him," "to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," to "present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service."--2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Col. 1:24; Rom. 12:1.

## **THE CHRIST IN THE FLESH, THE ELIJAH**

As we have already pointed out, Christ in the flesh, Head and Body, is the antitypical Elijah, which does a work in the world preparing for and introductory to the reign of glory of the same class on the spirit plane as the Christ of glory, Head and Body. The Messenger of Jehovah is the same, though under two different conditions: first, in the flesh, in weakness, in ignominy, in sorrow and pain and dying, despised and rejected of men; second, in glory crowned with all power in heaven and in earth, establishing righteousness and forcefully subduing and bringing into subjection to the Divine will every creature and every thing, and triumphing so that finally, by the end of the Millennial Age, this great Messenger--by the two parts of his service, first in suffering and second in glory--will accomplish all that the great Jehovah purposed respecting the race of mankind. By these two parts of His service this great and glorious Messenger will have prepared the way of Jehovah, will have made straight all the paths, all the arrangements, all the affairs for the establishment of the everlasting reign of the Kingdom of heaven.

This brings us down to the period mentioned by the Apostle respecting Christ: He must reign until He shall have put all things under His (Jehovah's) feet. Then the Son, the Christ, having put all things into subjection, will Himself be subject to the Father, that the Father may be the all in all of the universe (1 Cor. 15:28), though the Father graciously and generously provides that His Messenger--whose loyalty will have been so thoroughly demonstrated both by the sufferings of the present time and the glories of the Age to come--that this glorious anointed One shall forever be associated with Him in the everlasting Kingdom, as it is written, "Let all the angels of God reverence Him."--Heb. 1:6.

## **"THE MASTER WHOM YE SEEK"**

The word *Lord* in this second sentence is not in the Hebrew *Jehovah*, but signifies master, superior, teacher. Jehovah is represented as the speaker, who evidently refers to the Lord Jesus, assuring those who have the ear to hear and understand that the Messiah whom they seek shall suddenly come to His Temple. There is a difference between the significations of "quickly" and "suddenly." The Messiah did not quickly come to His Temple, for over two thousand years have elapsed since this prophecy was written, and the Temple itself ("which Temple ye are") is not yet complete, though the living stones for it have nearly all been chiseled and polished with the adversities of this Gospel Age, and we are now living in the time when these living stones are being brought together on the other side of the veil. When the whole work shall have been completed, and the glory of the Lord shall fill the Temple, the prediction of this Scripture before us shall have its fulfilment. It will be a sudden matter in that the Jews, and others outside the Temple class, will be in such complete ignorance respecting the whole procedure that the results will be wholly unexpected, a time to them most sudden.

In a certain sense or degree, in a shadowy sense, Jesus at His First Advent offered Himself to the Jewish people--"He came to His own and His own received Him not"--and He said to them, "Your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38.) That entrance into Jerusalem, riding on an ass, hailed by the people with palm branches as the King, the Messiah, the Son of David, and His entering into the Temple and

scourging therefrom the money-changers and merchants, was indeed a sudden matter, wholly unexpected by the people of that time, and to a certain extent it fulfilled this prophecy, because that people on that occasion were typical of the great presentation of Himself as the King, due now to be accomplished on a higher plane, on a plane of glory, Jesus the Head now presenting Himself, not merely as the King of Israel, but as the King of the world--not merely as the man Christ Jesus, but as the glorified Christ with His glorified Body, which is the Church.

## **THE OATH-BOUND COVENANT**

Our Lord Jesus was indeed the Messenger or Servant of the Covenant, the one through whom the Covenant would have its fulfilment. The Abrahamic Covenant, the Oath-Bound Covenant, is referred to. It is the hope of natural Israel and the hope of spiritual Israel, "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."--Heb. 6:19.

The Messenger or Servant of that Covenant is the one through whom its provisions will be accomplished, namely, the seed of Abraham--"which seed is Christ." (Gal. 3:16.) Again, we see that this seed has its two developments, one in the flesh, in suffering ignominy, the other in the spirit, in power and great glory--the one to mediate the Covenant by offering the sacrifice of atonement, the other to execute the gracious provisions of that Covenant, made possible by the atoning sacrifice. The sufferings of Christ sealed or ratified this Covenant, and made it possible for Him to be the Mediator of it, and to extend through that Covenant blessings to the entire human family, who were under the curse and who are mentioned in the Covenant, all the families of the earth."

Again we note that in the Divine Plan the "Church," the "saints," the "very elect," the "Little Flock," the "Bride," is associated by the Lord with both phases of this work, "in the sufferings of this present time and in the glories that shall follow." It requires the work of this entire Gospel Age to seal the New Covenant. The New Covenant is to benefit and bless Israel after the flesh and all the families of the earth; its provisions are the forgiveness of sins, the renewing of a right heart in all those who desire to come into harmony with the Lord and a restitution to them of all that was lost through the original transgression and its curse. As a result of this operation of this New Covenant there shall be no more curse, and tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and there shall be no more sighing and no more dying and no more pain, for the former things shall have passed away.--Rev. 21:4.

## **JOINT-HEIRS WITH HIM**

The Church, the Bride of Christ, is made partaker reckonedly, by faith, of the benefits and blessings of that New Covenant; justification is reckoned as restitution, although not actually restored or perfected. The sins of the believer are covered and the consecrated ones are reckoned as New Creatures, even though they still tabernacle in imperfect flesh. The acceptance of the Bride of Christ is not under the New Covenant but under the original Abrahamic Covenant, not to be part of those who will be blessed by the seed but to be associates and joint-heirs with Christ as members of the seed. This the Apostle distinctly points out, saying, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) If we are heirs according to that Abrahamic promise it means that we are

members of the seed class, and that our great mission is the blessing of all the families of the earth. A certain amount of this blessing comes to the families of the earth during the time of our sacrificing, namely, the reflected or refracted light of the glory of God enjoyed by us through His Spirit; but the great bulk of the blessing for Israel after the flesh, and for all the families of the earth, waits until the seed shall have been completed, until the change from a body of humiliation to a body of glory, until divested of the imperfections of the present and clothed upon with the glory, honor and immortality of the Divine nature, to which we are heirs through our Lord Jesus.--2 Pet. 1:4.

### **"WHOM YE DELIGHT IN"**

The Jews had exulted and delighted in the promise of the coming Messiah for centuries. They were delighting in this great promise and the hopes attached to it at the very time the Redeemer was in their midst and they knew Him not and crucified Him. They are still delighting in this promise of the Messiah--yea, the whole world has caught to a large extent the infection, and is hoping and waiting for "the desire of all nations" (Hag. 2:7) that then shall come, although they associate with the gracious hope and promise many misconceptions and gross error.

When Messiah's Kingdom shall be established, invisible to men--when its reign shall begin, after it shall have reached the point of putting down sin, after the great time of trouble shall have humbled mankind, after the reign of righteousness shall have been thoroughly established--it will prove to be the desire of all nations, the delight of all nations. The Lord knows just what the world wants, but the poor world at the present time is blind through sin, ignorance and superstition, misconceptions, etc., and must learn its lesson and thus be prepared for the blessing which the Lord is preparing for it.

### **"THE DAY OF HIS COMING"**

"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap, and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, and they shall offer unto the Lord offerings of righteousness."

Ah! there it is. The world is anxious for the blessing, but realizes not to what extent the inbred sin is incompatible with the reign of righteousness which it desires, and in which is the great blessing God has promised. Before the blessings come, the day of wrath, the "fire of God's jealousy," must pass upon the world. It is not to be a fire merely to destroy, but specially to purify; it is not to be a literal fire but a symbolical fire, following which the Lord will turn to the people a pure language, a pure message, a clear declaration of the Divine will and Plan of salvation.--Zeph. 3:8, 9.

While this Messenger will serve the world as an instructor, as the antitype of Elijah, reproving sin and seeking to bring the world into harmony with God, and succeeding in finding only the Israelites indeed, there will come an end to this work when the Little Flock have all been found and when their purifying and chastisement will be over. The first work of the Messenger of the Covenant on the plane of glory

will be a work of judgment--indeed the entire work of the Millennial Age is to be a judging of the world in righteousness--punishing each sin promptly on its committal and rewarding every effort for righteousness promptly with blessings and favors. Under that reign of righteousness the whole world will have fullest opportunity for reconciliation with God, and those who will not accept the reconciliation will be utterly destroyed from amongst the people.--Acts 3:23.

### **"AS A REFINING FIRE"**

The beginning of the judgment will be especially upon the sons of Levi. The Levites represented the household of faith, who have made a consecration of themselves to the Lord. A certain class of these Levites, termed in the Scriptures "more than conquerors," will constitute the Royal Priesthood, the Body of Christ, while the remainder of it, called in the Scriptures "the great company, who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb," will be dealt with first by the great Messenger of the Covenant, not with a view to their destruction or injury, but with a view to the destruction of the flesh, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."--1 Cor. 5:5.

We may even go further than this and understand that the living members of the Royal Priesthood will be subjected to fiery trials, as the Apostle points out. The fire of this day, he says, shall try each man's work of what sort it is, and shall prove which have built their faith with gold, silver and precious stones, and which have built with the wood, hay, stubble of profession and, outward show and theories of men. (1 Cor. 3:12.) All of the gold class, the Little Flock, will be purified; all of the silver class, the Great Company, will be purified, to the intent that the offerings that they made to the Lord may be fully accepted of Him, even as the Apostle exhorts us, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." If it is our privilege to have some share in the fiery trials at the close of this Age, and at the inauguration of the New Dispensation, let us rejoice in whatever will bring us nearer to our Lord, in whatever will bring us closer into harmony with Him and His service, purifying our hearts and arousing our faith and making us all that would be acceptable and pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

### **"AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD"**

"Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord as in the days of old and in the former years." The fiery trials of the great time of trouble will thoroughly purge and purify all who are truly the Lord's people, all antitypical Israelites, and thenceforth they shall be fully in the Lord's favor and have His rich blessing, and only by wilful sins will they ever take themselves out of that blessed condition; but they may go on from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, from opportunity to opportunity, from restitution to restitution, until at the end of the Millennial Age they shall have attained to all the good things of the Divine provision through this great Messenger of the Covenant.

In that time the Lord will come near in His judgments; they will be prompt; the people will learn distinctly and in a practical form what is pleasing and what is displeasing to the Lord; He will be a swift



witness against every evil thing and rebuke it, and thus all shall be taught of the Lord, and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth.

### **"I, THE LORD, CHANGE NOT"**

The basis for all these hopes of Israel and others is in the fact that God is unchangeable; He has promised and He will not fail--yea, He has sworn to this Covenant and it is therefore an Oath-Bound Covenant, and as a result all the families of the earth shall be blessed. There can be no failure, no miscarriage of this Plan, for God has pledged, Himself in word and in oath to its certainty. What a confidence this gives us! This was the Apostle's assurance as he thought of Israel after the flesh and how they were rejecting Jesus, and he wrote to us, "I would not, brethren, that ye be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part [temporarily] is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in [until the full number of the elect from the Gentiles shall have been completed, the Divine predestination respecting the Church, the Body of Christ]. Then all Israel shall be saved [recovered from the blindness into which they are now going--the blindness in which they have been for nearly nineteen centuries ]."--Rom. 11 :25.

The Apostle quotes in proof of this the Divine promise, assuring us that the gifts and callings of God are things that He will not repent of. (Rom. 11 :29.) It is on this unchangeableness of the Divine character that the Apostle predicates all of his hopes respecting the restoration of Israel to Divine favor and blessing through the glorified Church, and in turn the blessing of all the families of the earth through natural Israel under the glorified Church. As the Apostle again says, thus the fall of Israel becomes a channel for the enlightenment and blessing of the world.--Rom. 11 :12.

### **A LOCAL APPLICATION**

Then follows a part of the prophecy which seemingly was applicable to fleshly Israel: the Lord reproves them, showing them that His course toward them as a people fully conformed to the engagements of their Covenant at Sinai. Had they remained faithful to Him according to their agreement they might have had the great blessing even in Malachi's time. There is in this passage an exhortation for Israel to return to proper accord with the Lord, and to prove Him that He would be as prompt and faithful in giving them blessings as He was prompt and faithful in giving them chastisements for their unfaithfulness. The Lord represents Israel as not being aware of their true condition, of not being aware of how they were failing to keep their Covenant. Their hearts had become so selfish, had been so stunted in development along all spiritual lines, that they apparently did not realize that they were merely praying to the Lord with their lips while their hearts were far from Him. He points out to them that while keeping His ordinances in a certain outward and formalistic manner, they were not fulfilling the requirements of the Law as they should reasonably have understood them.

From the statement here made it would appear that, instead of coming to the Lord with the very best that they had as offerings to Him and His cause, they were inclined to seek to perform the letter of the Law and to avoid its spirit; apparently they were ready to bring sacrifices and offerings, but the selfishness of their hearts and their lack of true appreciation of the Lord led them to proffer Him the weak and the lame and the poor while

they kept the better for their own use. The Lord urges upon them that they test Him, prove Him, and see whether or not He would grant them great blessings if they would but enter into the spirit of their consecration and offer unto the Lord the best of what they possessed.

### **A LESSON HERE FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES**

Spiritual Israel, the Elijah class, the Lord's consecrated people still in the flesh and seeking to make their calling and election sure to the Kingdom glories, may gain a profitable lesson from these sharp criticisms of natural Israel. How is it with us? We as spiritual Israelites have vowed unto the Lord the first fruits, the very best, the very chiefest, the most valuable of all that we have and all that we are--of time, influence, talents, money, all. To what extent are we rendering unto the Lord our offerings and sacrifices in harmony with this our Covenant?

Is it not true respecting many spiritual Israelites that, instead of bringing the very best that they have to the Lord and to His service, they bring Him merely the tail-ends, the imperfect things, offerings with which He is not well pleased? This is so in respect to all who use the best they have in self-gratification, in providing chiefly and best for their own natural conditions and appetites, honors, dignities, leaving for the Lord the remnants, the fag-ends of time, influence, reputation and money. Alas, we fear this is true of many Israelites today: they fail to grasp the thought that they have given their all to the Lord, and that what they have, therefore, is His, and that they are merely His stewards, pledged to Him to use time, money, influence, all that He has committed to their care, as His and to His glory to the best of their knowledge and ability.

The argument which the Lord used to natural Israel was that, if they properly loved and respected Him as their God, they would feel that they had nothing too good to offer to Him and His service, and that it was a privilege on their part to be permitted to lay their little all at His feet, the very best that they had or could present. How much more true is this in respect to spiritual Israel, whose eyes of understanding have to some extent been opened, who are enabled to see the Lord from the new standpoint, to realize what great things He has done for us, and what wonderful things He has proposed to give us if we show ourselves worthy of them by faithfulness to our Covenant obligations.

As our Lord pointed out to the Jews, He requires these things not because He is needy, for all the gold and silver and the cattle upon a thousand hills are His, but that He seeks in us evidences of our sincerity, our faithfulness in respect to our Covenant engagement when we pledged all that we possessed, houses, lands, father, mother, sisters, brothers, yea, life itself, all to be subjected to and laid at the feet of our Redeemer and Master, that we might at any cost, at any sacrifice, be permitted to render such service as He would accept, realizing the while that all that He would accept would be a reasonable service, and on our part it would be an offering far too small to be worthy of our King and our Creator.

**"PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH"**



The Lord's words to natural Israel should come to spiritual Israel with still greater force, "Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord." If any feel themselves poor, if any feel that spiritually they are lean, that they are not enjoying such fellowship with the Lord as they would desire, that they are unable to draw as closely to Him as they would like, to all such the Lord says the fault is, You have neglected your Covenant: here are My words, "Prove Me," fulfil the terms of your Covenant, and see if I will not be faithful, and do for you exceedingly and abundantly more than you could have asked or thought.

It behooves us, dear friends, to look about us to note to what extent we have been faithful to our Covenant of sacrifice and to remember that it is not a sacrifice for a day or a year, but, "even unto death." "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) A little while the trials will be over, but until that little while is past we are in the trial time, and it is proving us either worthy or unworthy of the glorious favors which we seek, the chief blessing, joint-heirship. If we appreciate it let us seek it in the Lord's way, let us see to what extent there are other things in our lives that we might render unto the Lord and which He will accept, not through the worthiness of the deeds or the sacrifices but through the merit of Christ. Let us see if the days and hours as they pass are spent in a consecrated manner; let us note to what extent moments and days are spent in some selfish manner, or wasted upon others beyond the reasonable requirements of duty as marked out in the Divine Word. Let us see to what extent we perform our vows unto the Lord; let us take note of what of time or influence or money we are using in the Divine service and what proportion this bears to the whole.

Of the Jews the Lord required a tenth, a "tithe." Of the spiritual Israelites He makes no positive requirements but leaves it for us, that by the degree of our sacrifices, according to our abilities, we may demonstrate the measure of our love. But who would say that one-tenth of time, influence and talent would be enough for the spiritual Israelite to render to the Lord for all His benefits? Surely all would agree that a fourth would be a very small measure indeed as compared with our true obligation. All should feel that the sacrifice is a *whole* burnt offering, a complete sacrifice of every item and element of our talents and powers and privileges; all should feel that he may keep for use upon himself and for use upon those dependent upon him only such measure as would seem to be necessary to decency and reasonable comfort and not for what might be termed luxury or waste. Those who accept the Lord's proposition heartily, and render to Him their all to the extent of their ability, will find their leanness departing and their joy of heart increasing more and more.

## **REVIEW: THE EXILE AND THE RESTORATION**

**--SEPTEMBER 24--**

*Golden Text.--"Jehovah hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."--Psa. 126:3*

PSALM 126 seems to picture the returning of the Jewish exiles from the Babylonish captivity, our Golden Text being the key to the joys of the occasion--"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

This Psalm may properly have several applications. The first of these would be to Israel's deliverance from the Babylonian captivity, when Cyrus gave permission that all who desired might return to Palestine. About fifty-three thousand availed themselves of this privilege and of his assistance. The

people rejoiced in this manifestation of the turning away of Divine disfavor and the return to them of Divine favor and blessing. The pardon of their transgressions as a nation was here evidenced in this privilege of returning to God's favor. A writer describing the scene of their departure from Babylon says:

"Forth from the gates of Babylon they rode, to the sound of joyous music--a band of horsemen playing on flutes and tabrets, accompanied by their own two hundred minstrels and one hundred and twenty-eight singers of the Temple (Ezra 2:41-65), responding to the prophet's voice as they quitted the shade of the gigantic walls and found themselves in the open desert beyond: 'Go ye out of Babylon, Flee from the thraldoms, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Eternal hath redeemed His servant Jacob.'"--Isa. 48:20.

We are interested in the affairs of this narrative sympathetically, and also because we realize that the Lord's providences control in respect to all the affairs of Israel, His people. But we have greater and more profound interest in the events here narrated now that our eyes have been opened to see that the seventy years of desolation of the land of Palestine represent the seventy jubilee cycles appointed to them in the time of fulfilment of which we are now living.

A secondary application of the Psalm is just before us. Israel has been in a far greater captivity to Christendom during the past eighteen centuries. She has the promise, nevertheless, of a mighty deliverance. The Cyrus who gave them liberty to return from literal Babylon was a type of the great Messiah who is about to give full liberty for the return of God's ancient people to Divine favor--to Palestine. St. Paul refers to this coming deliverance of Israel in Romans 11:25-29. The Deliverer will do more than merely regather them. He will do that which He has predicted; as the Apostle says, "This is My Covenant with them when I shall take away their sins." See also Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-11.

Israel's sins have not yet been taken away, even as the world's sins have not yet been taken away. The great Redeemer indeed has died for sins, and He is the sinner's friend, but as yet He has only appeared in the presence of God for *us--the Church*--not for the world. He is the Church's Advocate only; He advocates for none except those who desire to approach to God, and these are the saintly only--such as love righteousness and hate iniquity.

The world is enslaved by Sin and Death, the twin monarchs which are now reigning and causing mankind to groan. We were born in this enslaved condition; as the Scriptures declare, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, in sin did my mother conceive me." Our race, groaning under the weaknesses and imperfections we have thus inherited--mental, moral and physical--longs for the promised deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. The majority of mankind undoubtedly feel the gall of their slavery, and will be glad to be free.

The great Deliverer is the antitypical--Cyrus. Soon He will be victorious and will establish His Kingdom under the whole heaven. Soon the Church class, the saintly, the "*elect*," will be glorified, and then the time will come for the blessing of the nonelect--for the restitution to human perfection and to a worldwide Palestine, which Messiah's Kingdom and power will produce. "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Death will be destroyed;

*sheol, Hades*, the grave, will be destroyed, by the resurrection of the dead therefrom--" Every one in his own order."

Our interest in Israel's deliverance from Babylon is still further awakened when we remember that in this long interim of time God's favor was transferred from the Jewish house of servants to the Gospel house of sons, and that an antitypical Babylon has carried away captive the Lord's people and all the golden vessels of Truth. Spiritual Israel in captivity has been waiting for the glorious deliverance to be brought about by Immanuel, the Deliverer greater than Cyrus.

The proclamation of liberty for the Lord's people to go forth from Babylon has not been generally responded to by them. A comparatively small number of them have had such love for the Lord, such a reverence for His promises, such a desire to be inheritors of those promises as to lead them to sever the earthly ties and the bonds which hold them satisfied in Babylon. But some have heard, some have rejoiced; some have stepped out. Our antitypical Cyrus, our present Lord, has permitted us to bring back the golden vessels, the golden truths which for so long have been misappropriated, misapplied, misunderstood, misused in Babylon.

### **"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"**

The Lord has been calling His people forth from mystic Babylon ("Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots"). His words are, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4.) No one should be urged to come out of Babylon. If he does not come out joyfully, "with singing," making melody in his heart to the Lord, glad of the opportunity of coming out, glad of the opportunity of getting away from the error and into the place of Divine favor and inheritance of the Divine promises, let him stay in Babylon. If he loves the things of this present time, the social advantages of Babylon, the business advantages and opportunities, the greater honor of men, the greater comfort and ease, let him so indicate to the Lord and refuse to respond to the Lord's message.

As the company of the Israelites left Babylon with great joy and rejoicing, so we who have gotten free from mystic Babylon rejoice exceedingly and would not go back under any consideration. By and by, when the time of trouble is imminent, others may still escape and deliver their souls, but it will not be with the same joy: some we are assured will be in Babylon up to the time of its fall, and will be delivered, but theirs will not be the songs of gladness and joy and victory; they will not be of the overcoming class. Rather it will be theirs to mourn that they were unfaithful to the voice of the Lord, that they remained in Babylon contrary to His Word and that they receive of her plagues, her chastisements, her troubles, which so surely will come thick and fast--the "seven last plagues."

### **"SONGS IN THE NIGHT HE GIVETH"**

While the whole creation groans under its load of sin and sorrow, the saintly few may sing, may rejoice, even in the midst of all the sorrows of life, and even though they share the results of sin as fully or even

more fully than do others. The secret of their joy is twofold: (1) They have experienced reconciliation to God. (2) They have submitted their wills to His will. They obtained this new relationship by the way of faith in the Redeemer--faith in His blood of Atonement. They entered by the "strait gate" and "narrow way" of consecration to God--surrendering their own wills and covenanting to do the Divine will to the best of their ability.

This submission of the will to God and the realization that all their life's affairs are in God's keeping and under His supervision gives rest to the heart. They have a rest and peace in this surrendered condition which they never knew when they sought to gratify self-will and ignored the right of their Creator to the homage of their hearts and the obedience of their lives.

Similarly, these have joy and peace and songs of thankfulness to God because to them He grants a knowledge of His Divine purposes, and shows them things to come. These see beyond the trials and tribulations of the present time--they see the glories that will follow the present time of suffering. These see that the Church, the saintly few of all denominations and of all nationalities, are prospective heirs of God--heirs of glory, honor and immortality and association with the Redeemer in His glorious Kingdom. This encourages them. They see also the outlines of the Divine Program for the blessing of all the families of the earth. When they thus perceive that God is interested in their dear ones who are not saints, and interested in the whole human family, very few of whom are saints, it causes them rejoicing. When they perceive that God has arranged that through Christ and the glorified Church all the families of the earth shall be blessed, it makes them "joyful in the house of their pilgrimage"--while waiting for their own change from human to Divine nature.

Then let our songs abound,

And every tear be dry;

We're marching through Immanuel's ground,

To fairer prospects nigh."

## **BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION**

STUDY CXL--SEPTEMBER 3

### **SATAN CAST INTO THE ABYSS--Rev. 20:3**

(751) Would merely the binding of Satan insure against further deceptions or evil operations amongst mankind, or is something additional necessary? H '21-9.

(752) What assurance have we from the record given us in the Scripture under consideration that mankind will not be harassed by Satan's deceptions during their judgment Day? H '21-9.

(753) What is the meaning of the word "abyss"? What is signified by the sealing of the abyss ? Explain in this connection Isaiah 24:21-23. H '21-9.

(754) Will the fact that Satan is bound mean that all mankind will yield full heart obedience throughout the thousand years? Cite Scriptures bearing upon this, and explain. H '21-9.

(755) Who are the "nations" referred to in verse 3? With Satan bound and all evil influences restrained, what will constitute the work of Christ and the Church during the Millennium? Show how our Lord's parable of the sheep and goats applies to this time. H '21-9, 10.

#### STUDY CXLI--SEPTEMBER 10

#### **MESSIAH'S GLORIOUS REIGN--Rev. 20:4**

(756) What are the various descriptive names that apply to the thousand years of Christ's reign? and what do these portray? H '21-22.

(757) What mistake is frequently made by expositors with respect to the interpretation of the last three chapters of Revelation that causes confusion? H '21-22.

(758) Give a brief outline of the work of the Millennium as described in these three chapters. H '21-22.

(759) What is the logical conclusion as to the interpretation of the personages sitting on thrones, and why? H '21-22.

(760) What is signified by the statement, "judgment was given them?" H '21-23.

#### **HYMNS OF DAWN FOR OCTOBER**

The following selections are suggested as the morning hymns for the month of October:

(1) 145; (2) 112; (3) 128; (4) 8; (5) 57; (6) 62; (7) 281; (8) 267; (9) 197; (10) 192; (11) 130; (12) 283; (13) 210; (14) 190; (15) 174; (16) 328; (17) 294; (18) 309; (19) 28; (20) 10; (21) 83; (22) 160; (23) 23; (24) 134; (25) 13; (26) 12, (27) 87; (28) 116; (29) 149; (30) 95; (31) 219.

## **THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM**

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## "THE PEACE OF GOD"

*"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."--Phil. 4:7*

PEACE is defined to be a state of quiet or tranquillity, freedom from disturbance or agitation, calmness, repose. Such a state of mind is here affirmed of God. His is a mind tranquil, calm, undisturbed and never agitated nor even wearied nor perplexed by any of the cares of His vast dominion. Yet this perfect peace of God, the Scriptures show, is not, due either to the fact that there are no disorders in His vast dominion, nor yet to any stoical indifference to pain or pleasure, but rather to that perfect poise of His glorious attributes which makes Him Master of His situation as Sovereign of the whole universe. Have we admired the coolness and calm self-possession of a great general such as Grant or Napoleon in the midst of the confusion and smoke of battle? or of a great statesman such as Gladstone or Bismarck in the midst of national perplexities and perils? or of able and skilled physicians or others in critical times and places?--these are only faint illustrations of the peace of self-possession and self-confidence which rules in the mind of God. He is never confused, bewildered, perplexed, anxious or careworn, nor in the least fearful that His plans will miscarry or, His purposes fail; because all power and wisdom inhere in Him. The scope of His mighty intellect reaches to the utmost bounds of possibility, comprehends all causes and discerns with precision all effects; consequently He knows the end from the beginning, and that, not only upon philosophical principles, but also, by intuition. As the Creator of all things and the originator of all law, He is thoroughly acquainted with all the intricate subtleties of physical, moral and intellectual law, so that no problem could arise the results of which are not manifest to His mind. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." --1 John 1 :5.

God, the Creator of all things, is, also the competent Sustainer of all things. In silent grandeur, from age to age, the whole physical universe fulfills His will, without a suspicion of disorder or mishap; and the same power is pledged for its sustenance throughout the eternal future.

Thus, from His own vast inherent resources of power and wisdom, springs the peace of God. But not from this source alone is the Divine peace; for peace is the certain concomitant of inherent goodness. God is the impersonation of every virtue and every grace; consequently He has the blessed satisfaction and peace of conscious moral perfection as well as inherent wisdom and power.

Yet we find this peace of God co-existing with much of disorder and trouble. As a Father He shows us that He bears a father's love to all His intelligent creatures--"the whole family of God in heaven and in earth"--and that for His "pleasure they are and were created." (Eph.3:15; Rev.4:11.) He created them in His own, likeness--with the same mental and moral attributes, so that He might have communion and fellowship with them as sons, and they with Him as a Father, that thus, in mutual fellowship and communion, the Creator and the creature might find pleasure, happiness, and delight. This likeness of God includes in all not only the same mental faculties, but also the free exercise of the same in the formation of character. A creature incapable of thus forming character would not be in God's likeness. And for the purpose of developing character the alternative of good and evil must be placed before him. The right and wrong principles of action must be discerned and the individual left free to his own choice in the matter, that the pleasure of God may be realized in the virtuous character resultant from the free choice of righteousness.

Since the love of God for His newly created and innocent creatures is akin to, though much stronger than, the love of an earthly parent for an innocent infant; and since that loving interest and solicitude does not grow cold as he advances in years, but earnestly watches for the development of the principles and fruits of righteousness, it is manifest that, like an earthly parent, God experiences the sense of either pleasure or pain, according as His free intelligent creatures choose the right course or the wrong. Of this we are fully assured, not only by this reasoning from the fact of His father-hood, but also by all of those Scriptures which speak of some things as abominable, displeasing, hateful and despicable to Him and as giving Him no pleasure; which say that His anger burns against them, and that His indignation and wrath wax hot, even to their destruction; and, further, by those Scriptures which speak of His pleasure, love, joy and delight in other things--in the principles of righteousness and those who obey them. The appreciation of pleasurable emotions necessarily implies ability to appreciate emotions of an opposite character; for pain and pleasure may properly be considered the ebb and flow of the same emotion.

These exhibitions of the mind of God indicate clearly an emotional nature in the Divine being, of which fact we might also judge from the realization of our own emotional nature, since man was created in God's image. No, dear friends, God is not a God of stoical indifference, insensible to the emotions of pleasure and pain, but the perfect poise of His attributes preserves the equilibrium of peace under all circumstances, whether of pain or pleasure.

With this thought, then, let us consider the circumstances under which the marvelous "peace of God" has been perpetually maintained. The deep-laid plan of God in all His creative works required long time for its accomplishment. Across the vista of ages He saw in His purpose the glory of an intelligent creation in His own likeness, established in righteousness, and worthy of His gift of eternal life. He therein foresaw the mutual pleasure of the Creator and the creature, and with a peaceful patience He resolved to wait for the glorious consummation. As the Plan developed and time rolled on, the free moral agency of His creatures, misused by some, was enabling them to develop evil characters, and by this means discord was introduced into His family ("the family of God in heaven and in earth"--all His creatures, angels and men), and the family was divided, some holding to righteousness and some choosing to do evil. But such a contingency was one of the foreseen necessities of the far-reaching Plan, the glorious outcome of which was, in the Divine judgment, worth all the cost of both trouble and loss which He foresaw.

What a dreadful thing is family discord! How a prodigal son or a wayward daughter often brings the gray hairs of the human parent down with sorrow to the grave! Ah, the Heavenly Father knows something of such sorrow; for He saw Satan, one of His sons (Isa. 14:12), an angel of light, as lightning, fall from heaven (Luke 10: 18); and for six thousand years at least, that son has been in open and defiant rebellion against God and most actively and viciously engaged in inciting further rebellion and wickedness. He saw many of the angels leave their first estate and become the allies of Satan, and then He saw also the whole human race fall into sin. Did ever any human parent find such a conspiracy--so virulent and hateful--spring up in his family? Surely not. Then God has found it necessary to perform the unpleasant duties of discipline. In His justice He must disown the disloyal sons and deal with them as enemies; and though all the while His fatherly love was preparing to bless the deceived and fallen ones when the purposes of redemption should restore the repentant to His favor, love must be veiled, while only stern, relentless justice could be manifested. This has been no happifying duty, nor has the attitude of the sinner been pleasing to Him.

Consider the love against which these recreants sinned: that though from God cometh every good and perfect gift, His favors have been despised, His love spurned, His righteous authority conspired against and defied, His character maligned, misrepresented, made to appear odious and hateful, unrighteous and even despicable. Yet, through it all "the peace of God" continues, though for six thousand years He has endured this contradiction of sinners against Himself. And still, O wondrous grace! His love abounds; and it is written that He so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners, that He gave His only begotten Son to die for them; and that through Him judgment (trial) is also to be extended to those angels that fell, with the exception of Satan, the leader and instigator of the whole conspiracy--the father of lies.--John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:10, 14.

This gift of Divine love was another indication of the cost to our Heavenly Father of His great and marvelous Plan. Not only did He behold the fall into sin of a large proportion of His family, but their recovery cost the sacrifice of the dearest treasure of His heart, and the subjection of this beloved one to the most abject humiliation, ignominy, suffering and death. Again the illustration of a parent's love assists us in comprehending the cost of this manifestation of Jehovah's love. With what tender and yearning emotions of love must He have made this sacrifice of His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. In addition to all the graces of His character manifested since the very dawn of His being was now added the further grace of full submission to the Divine will, even when the pathway pointed out was one of pain and humiliation.

Ah, did the Father let Him go on that errand of mercy without the slightest sensation of sorrowful emotion? Had He no appreciation of the pangs of a father's love when the arrows of death pierced the heart of His beloved Son? When our dear Lord said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and again, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt," did it touch no sympathetic chord in the heart of the Eternal? Yea, verily: the unfeigned love of the Father sympathetically shared the Lord's sorrow. The principle taught in the Divine Word, that true love weeps with those that weep and rejoices with those that rejoice, is one which is also exemplified in the Divine character. The immortal Jehovah could not Himself die for us, His Divine nature being proof against death. And, even if He could have died, there would have been no higher power to raise Him out of death, and all creation would have been left forever without a governor, and only disaster and ruin could have ensued. But God could and did sacrifice at great cost to His loving fatherly nature, the dearest treasure of His heart, and thus He manifested (1 John 4:9) the great love where with He loved His deceived and fallen creatures. If this sacrifice cost Him nothing, if it were impossible for His mind to realize any painful emotion, even under such a circumstance, then the gift of His Son would be no manifestation of love; for that which costs nothing manifests nothing.

Our Lord Jesus also manifested His great sympathy for the Father in the misrepresentation of His character which He has so patiently endured for ages. It was the one effort of His life to glorify the Father and to rectify among men the false impressions of His glorious character to show to men His goodness, benevolence, love and grace, and to lead them to love the merciful God who so loved them, even while they were yet sinners, as to seek them out and to plan for their eternal salvation.

Yes, there has been great commotion in the disrupted family of God--commotion in which the Lord declares He has had no pleasure (Psa. 5:4); but, nevertheless, "the *Peace of God*" has never been disturbed. In the full consciousness of His own moral perfection, His unerring wisdom, His mighty power, and with the fullest appreciation of justice and the keenest and most ardent love of the beauty of



holiness, patiently and peacefully, and even joyfully in the midst of tribulation, He has endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself for six thousand years. But during the seventh millennium, according to the Divine purpose, it will be the joyful privilege of our Lord Jesus to fully manifest to all creatures in heaven and in earth the Father's glorious character. Then will the Father rejoice in the grandeur of His finished work and in the everlasting peace and happiness of His family in heaven and in earth, re-united under one head." (Eph. 1 :10 Diaglott.) This blessed consummation will not be realized, however, until the incorrigible fallen sons of God, disowned, and disinherited because they loved unrighteousness and would not be reclaimed, shall have been cut off. This will be the last unpleasant duty of the Creator and Father of all, who positively declares that it is a sad duty, yet nevertheless a duty which He will have the fortitude to perform in the interests of universal righteousness and peace. Hear Him: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"--Ezek. 33:11.

Thus we see that "the peace of God" is compatible with great commotion and with sorrow and pain of any kind; for it is not dependent upon outward circumstances, but upon the proper balancing of the mind and the conditions of a perfect heart. Such peace--the peace of God--was enjoyed also by our Lord Jesus in the midst of all the turmoil and confusion of His eventful earthly life. And this brings us to the consideration of our Lord Jesus' last legacy to His disciples, when He was about to leave the world, as expressed in the following--His own words:

### **OUR LORD'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT**

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth [in stinted measure or in perishable quality], give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."--John 14:27.

Thus, with abounding compassion and tenderness, did our Lord, on the last night of His earthly life, bestow upon His beloved disciples His parting blessing, His legacy of peace. It was the richest legacy He had to bequeath, and was one of priceless value. It was the promise of that tranquillity of soul, that rest and ease of mind, which He Himself possessed--the peace of God. It was the same peace which the Father Himself has always enjoyed, even in the midst of all the commotion which the permission of evil has brought about, but it was not derived from the same source. In Jehovah this peace was self-centered, because He realized in Himself the omnipotence of power and wisdom; while the peace of Christ was centered, not in Himself but in God, by faith in His wisdom, power and grace. So also if we would have "the peace of God," the peace of Christ--"My peace"--it must, like His, be centered in God by faith.

Yes, the peace of Christ was a priceless legacy; yet how quickly the storm-cloud of trouble, which was even then growing very dark, burst in its fury upon the heads of those very disciples to whom the words were directly addressed. It followed almost immediately the gracious bequest, and struck consternation, bewilderment, confusion, to their hearts and shook their faith from center to circumference. Then, where was the peace? While the Lord was speaking the words the foul betrayer, Judas, was out on his murderous errand; then followed the agony in Gethsemane and the terror and consternation among the disciples as they began to realize the fate of their beloved Lord. Soon their almost breathless suspense

deepened into more fearful forebodings as He stood alone before His merciless accusers and persecutors in the hall of Pilate and the court of Herod, while they were powerless to shield Him; and then came the tragic end, the horrors of the crucifixion.

Where was the promised peace under such circumstances--when, overcome with fear and dread, they all forsook Him and fled; and when Peter, although anxious to defend Him, was so filled with fear that three times he denied his Lord and with cursing declared that he never knew Him? Well, the peace had not yet come; for, as the Apostle Paul tells us, "Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament [a bequest] is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Heb. 9:16, 17.) But as soon as the tragic scene was over and the cry, "It is finished," fell upon their ears, strange as it may seem, there is evidence that peace began to steal into their hearts. The darkened heavens, the quaking earth, the rending rocks, the torn veil of the Temple, all spoke to them a message of comfort which the world could not receive.

To the world (Jews and Gentiles, both participating in the crime) the language of those events was that of Divine wrath and indignation against them. And as fear fell upon the people and the clamor and excitement of that awful day died away, they smote upon their breasts and returned to their homes; the guilty conspirators, having accomplished their work, slunk away to hide, if possible, from the wrath of God; Judas, filled with remorse, went out and hanged himself; and the Roman centurion and they that were with him, fearing greatly, said, "Truly this was the Son of God." But to the disciples of the Lord these events spoke a very different language. The cause of their blessed Master was their cause and it was God's cause; and these supernatural demonstrations were evidences to them that God was not regarding this matter with indifference; and though through the veil of darkness they could not read His bright designs, in these events there was to them a whisper of hope.

Three days later hope was revived by the news of His resurrection, confirmed to them by His appearance in their midst, and again forty days later by His ascension after His parting counsel and blessing and promised return and the instruction to tarry in Jerusalem for the promised Comforter, the Holy Spirit of adoption, not many days thence (at Pentecost). Then the peace of Christ, the Lord's rich legacy, began to be realized, and the tarrying days of prayer and expectancy were days of abiding peace--peace which flowed as a river. But when, on the day of Pentecost, the promised Comforter came, the river of their peace found a deeper bed, and their joy knew no bounds.

But not alone to the early Church was this legacy of peace bequeathed: it is the blessed inheritance of the entire Church, even to the end of the Age. The Lord showed His thought for us all on that very day, when in His prayer He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them also that shall believe on Me through their word."

The peace promised, observe, was not the short-lived peace of the world, which is sometimes enjoyed for a little season--while fortune smiles and friends abound and health endures, but which quickly vanishes when poverty comes in, and friends go out, and health fails and death steals away the treasures of the heart; but "My peace," the peace of God, which Christ Himself by faith enjoyed, who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, who lost friend after friend and in His last hour was forsaken by all of the few that remained--the peace that endured through loss, persecution, scorn and contempt and

even amidst the agonies of the cross. This peace is something which none of the vicissitudes of the present life, can destroy, and which no enemy can wrest from us.

What richer legacy could the Lord have left His beloved people? Suppose He had bent His energies during His earthly life to the accumulation of money, and that in so doing He had amassed an immense fortune to leave in the hands of His disciples wherewith to push forward the great work of the Age when He should be taken from them--money to pay the traveling expenses of the Apostles and to defray the numerous expenses incidental to the starting of the work in various places, such as the renting of lecture rooms, the payment of salaries to traveling brethren, etc., etc.--how soon would it all have vanished, and how poor would be our inheritance today! Why, "the man of sin" would surely have gotten hold of it in some way and not a vestige of the legacy would have reached this end of the Age. But, blessed be God, His rich legacy of peace still *abounds* to His people.

The peace promised is not such as the world can always recognize and appreciate, for the possessor of it, like the Lord Himself, and like the Heavenly Father as well, may have a stormy pathway. Indeed, that it must be so to all the faithful until the purposes of God in the permission of evil are accomplished, we are distinctly forewarned, but with the assurance that through the storms this peace shall, abide--"In the world ye shall have tribulation, but *in Me* ye shall have peace."

If we would know the foundation and security of this abiding peace which is able to survive the heaviest storms of life, we have only to look to the teaching example of the Lord and the Apostles. What was it that held them so firmly and gave them such rest of mind while they suffered? It was their faith--their faith in the love, power, and wisdom of God. They *believed* that what God had promised He was able also to perform, that His righteous and benevolent Plan could know no failure, for by the mouth of His Prophets He had declared, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure. . . . Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." "The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" (Isa. 46:9-11; 14:27.) On the assurances of God they rested. In Him their faith was anchored, and it mattered not how fiercely the storms raged or how they were tossed by the tempests of life while their anchor still held fast to the throne of God.

The language of our Lord's faith was, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee." He had been with the Father from the beginning, had realized His love and His goodness, had seen His power and had marked His righteousness and His loving kindness and fatherly providence over all His works. And so it is written, "By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. 53:11.) The knowledge which He had of the Father gave to Him a firm footing for faith in all His purposes concerning the future. Hence He could and did walk by faith. And that faith enabled Him to overcome all obstacles and secure the victory even over death.

So also it is written for our instruction--"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" - -that faith in God built, in our case, upon our Lord's testimony of the Father; and again it is written. that, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." It is only through steady, unwavering faith that the peace of God--the peace of Christ--will abide with His people. While the Lord was with His disciples, and they saw in Him the manifestation of the Father, their faith was firm and they had peace in Him, as He said, "While I was in the world I kept them;" but not until after He had left them was their faith anchored in God. After Pentecost they experienced the same peace that Christ had enjoyed--the blessed

peace that came from a knowledge of the fact that God acknowledged them as sons and heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ, if they would continue faithfully to follow in His steps.

Herein is also the basis of our peace. No matter how heavily the storms of life may assail us, we must never let go our anchor and allow ourselves to drift, but always remember that "the foundation of God standeth sure;" that "His truth is our shield and buckler;" that what He has promised He is able also to perform," notwithstanding our human imperfections and frailties; that covering these we have the imputed righteousness of Christ, our surety and Advocate; and that "the Father Himself loveth us," and "He considereth our frame and remembereth that we are dust," and so has compassion for the sons of His love and is very pitiful and of tender mercy. Indeed, "what more could He say than to us He hath said," to assure our faith and to steady and strengthen our hearts to patient endurance in the midst and conflicts of the Narrow Way of sacrifice?

There is nothing that puts the Christian at greater disadvantage in the presence of his foes than for him to let go, even temporarily, his grip upon the anchor of faith. Let him do so for a moment, and of necessity darkness begins to gather round him; he cannot see the brightness of his Father's face, for "without faith it is impossible to please God;" and while he grapples again for the anchor, the powers of darkness fiercely assail him with doubts and fears, based generally upon his human imperfections, which he should ever bear in mind are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness.

If we would have the peace of God reign in our hearts, we must never let go our anchor, "nor suffer Satan's deadliest strife to beat our courage down." The language of our hearts should always be, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." With this faith the peace of God, the peace which the Master bequeathed to us, ever abides. Thus the peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus; for it is written again, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

In the midst of the Christian warfare let our hearts be cheered and our minds stayed, not only with such assurances that all the Divine purposes shall be accomplished, but also with such promises of personal favor as these:

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." "Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." "The Father Himself loveth you," and "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." "Such as are upright in their way are His delight." "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart"--the peace of God which passeth all understanding, even in the midst of storm and tempest.

## **THE TWO ADVENTS OF THE WORLD'S REDEEMER - PART III.**

### **EVIDENCES OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE**

*"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."--Luke 21:28*

DURING the past year several chronological expositions have appeared in these columns, in which an earnest effort has been made to deal exhaustively with the subject of the times and seasons, with the thought of deriving comfort ourselves, as well as imparting a blessing to the reader. It now appears that some of the brethren drew the inference that the purport of the explanation we offered led to a denial of the Presence of Christ in these last days. We had no thought whatever of leading any one to any such conclusion, for in our investigation we have discovered no evidence or line of reasoning that would lead us to such a decision. In this article, therefore, we desire to correct this impression, and to review the evidences and indications that the Second Presence of Christ has taken place.

The signs and indications that we are now living in the days of the Presence of the Son of Man are clear and convincing to faith. These evidences are of two kinds: those which pertain to events, and those which pertain to chronology. Both are important. However, the one Divinely intended to be the more important is that which has to do with events; that is, those developments and events foretold by the Savior, as well as those contained in the "sure word of prophecy," which are to occur in the early stages of the period of Christ's reign, designated as the "*Parousia*." While all mankind witness these events, only the "watchers" understand their significance. That this kind of evidence is the more important and convincing is thus expressed by one of the most faithful "watchers"--one who was large extent instrumental in giving to the household of faith the "meat in due season" concerning the Lord's Plan:

**"In considering the Second Advent, we must not, any more than at the First Advent, expect all prophecies to mark one particularly eventful moment of our Lord's arrival, and to call the attention of all men to the fact of His Presence. Such is not God's usual method: such was not the case at the First Advent. The First Advent of Messiah was not marked by any sudden or surprising demonstration, out of the usual order of things, but it was manifested and proved by the gradual fulfilment of prophecy, showing to thoughtful observers that the events which should be expected were being accomplished on time. And thus it will be at His Second Advent. It is of less importance that we discover the exact moment of His arrival than that we discern the fact of His Presence when He has arrived; even as at the First Advent it was important to be able to recognize His Presence, and the sooner the better, but much less important to know the exact date Of His birth, In considering the Second Advent, the act of coming and the moment of arrival are too frequently the thought, whereas it, should be thought of as *a period of presence*; as was the First Advent. The precise moment at which that Presence would begin would then seem less important, and His object and work during the period of His Presence would receive the greater consideration."--'Studies, Vol. III, pp. 106, 107.**

### **IMPORTANCE OF CHRONOLOGICAL PROPHECIES**

The chronological prophecies are also of great importance. These are the "time, times and a half," the 1290 and the 1335 days, the "seven times" or 2520 days, a day being counted as a year. A careful examination of these shows conclusively that they were not given for the purpose of fixing beforehand the date of the Second Advent, nor the date of the complete change of the true Church. It seems quite certain that there is no prophecy that would enable any one to determine the exact date of either of these most important events beforehand. The chronological period of the seven times is given in connection

with the people of Israel, and refers to the period of their oppression by the Gentiles, and of Gentile dominion over their home land--the land of Palestine. The time, times and a half (*1260* years) is the Divinely appointed period during which the great Papal system dominates the saints of the Gospel Age. (Dan. 7:25.) This chronological period seems also to have its application to the time of Gentile supremacy over Israel's land. The *1290* years seems to refer to an event in connection with an awakening on the part of the people of God concerning Advent matters. It seems also to apply to events in connection with returning favor to Israel. The ending of the *1335* years, as it relates to the Church, reaches, as Divinely stated, to the beginning of a special time of blessing to come to the watchful ones of the Gospel Age saints. This period seems also to reach a time of special blessedness to the Israelitish people--those who believe in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and have thus preserved their Messianic hopes. Its full ending marks the time when Daniel shall receive his reward, by resurrection, as we read: "Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the [1335] days."--Dan. 12:13.

It seems, quite plain and clear that the era of blessedness covers an indefinite period of time, beginning with the Second Advent and comprehending all the events occurring in connection with the resurrection of the sleeping saints of the Gospel Age, the change of the living ones without sleeping, as also the resurrection of the Old Testament saints and the full establishment of the Kingdom promised and so long prayed for.

The "seven times" or 2520 years are applicable to the period of time during which the Gentile nations shall oppress the people of Israel and possess their home land, indeed, rule the world. All the signs of the times point clearly to the fact that this period has now almost run its full course. It will have fully run out when the God of Israel will have taken the land of Palestine from the control of the Gentile nations. In considering this, prophetic period as related to the kingdom of Judah, it is necessary to keep in mind that its date of beginning refers to the time in history when all the kingdoms of the ancient world were by Divine decree given to Nebuchadnezzar, the noted king of Babylon. This was about the year 606 B.C. In full solar time this period ran its course in, 1914 A. D., and it is quite reasonable and Scriptural to say that 1914 A. D. marked the end of the Gentile *lease* of power. Examining the Scriptures of those events of Nebuchadnezzar's career, we learn that the subjugation of the kingdom of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, did not take place until about eighteen or nineteen years after the Divine lease of power was given, in 606 B.C., While the kings of Judah were vassal kings during this period, the Jewish polity did not cease altogether until about 587 or 588 B.C. We thus see that the full course of Gentile supremacy over the Israelitish nation will be due to close eighteen or nineteen years after 1914, in about ten or eleven years hence.

There is another symbolical prophecy. It is referred to in Daniel 8. It is a period of 2,300 years. It has to do with what is termed in the Scriptures, the defilement and cleansing of the Sanctuary. This seems to refer to both the typical and antitypical Sanctuary; that is, to the Jewish literal Temple and the true Church, the spiritual Temple. This prediction as it related to the spiritual Temple, ran its course about 1846 A. D.

## **SIX THOUSAND YEARS OF HUMAN HISTORY IN THE PAST**

Another *literal* chronological period is that of the 6,000 years of man's history from his creation. It has quite generally been held by godly men, students of prophecy, that after 6,000 years of man's toiling state have ended, a thousand years of rest would begin to be ushered in, and thus six one-thousand-year days would be followed by a seventh thousand-year Sabbath day. While this belief is not based upon any definite statement of Scripture, yet there seems to, be a strong inference to this effect. Concerning this generally accepted inference, we have the following from the pen of BROTHER RUSSELL:

**"The Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand [year] will be the epoch of Christ's reign, the great Sabbath Day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation. The law given to Israel, the typical people, appointing that six days of labor and weariness should be followed by one of refreshment and rest from their works, seems fitly to illustrate the six thousand years in which the whole creation labors and groans under the bondage of sin and death (Rom. 8:22) in a vain endeavor to extricate itself, and the grand Millennial Day, in which the weary and heavy laden may come to Christ Jesus, the shepherd and bishop of their souls, and through Him find rest, refreshment and restitution--in which, through the merits of His precious blood, they may find repentance and remission of sins. On the typical seventh day, He inquired of the impotent man, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' and in answer to his faith and obedience gave him strength to take up his bed and walk. (See John 5:6-9; also Matt. 12:10, 13; John 7:23; Luke 13: 11-16; 14:1-5.) So during the antitypical Sabbath, the Millennium, it will be declared to the world that '*whosoever will*' may have life and health eternal if he will take the steps of faith and obedience."--Studies, Vol. 11, pp. 39, 40.**

It is very generally believed by students of Bible chronology, that the 6,000 years of man's history, including the period in Eden, lies at least some twenty or twenty-five years in the past; and while the type necessarily refers to history outside of Eden, it seems quite reasonable to believe that the Eden state could not have been more than seven years in length; therefore we have already entered upon the seventh thousand year.

As we consider these prophetic periods in connection with this latter fact, the most reasonable view to take is that chronological prophecy was given, not to fix a date for the Second Advent, nor the date when all the members of the true Church will have been translated to heavenly glory, but, rather, that she might look about her to see if the Divinely predicted *events* are transpiring which give evidence that she is in the period of the Second Presence of her Lord, and thus determine approximately the time of her change. The words of Christ given as one feature of His reply to His disciples, to the question, "What shall be the sign [indication] of Thy Presence and the consummation of the age?" (Matt. 24:1-3), emphasize the fact that transpiring events are what are to be looked for as indications of His Second Presence. These words are: "When ye shall *see* these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; [not that the Second Advent is near, but] for your deliverance draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28.) As the Savior utters no prediction containing a time element, we conclude that the evidences given by Him are transpiring events.

### **"SIGNS UPON THE EARTH"**

Some are disposed to inquire, "Does not the fact that we have discovered that the full end of Gentile Times did not, as many thought, end in 1914, require that we give up the idea that we are in the days of the Lord's Second Advent or Presence? We answer emphatically, No! The full ending of Gentile Times



eighteen or nineteen years later, has the effect only to confirm this matter. 1914 marked the end of the lease of power to the Gentiles--that period known as the Times of the Gentiles, beginning, as the Scriptures clearly indicate, in 606 B.C. The eighteen or nineteen years between 606 B.C. and 587 or 588 B.C., during which the predicted judgments were poured out upon the kingdom of Judah, correspond with the present time--with events transpiring amongst the nations from 1914 to 1933 or 1934. One of the very significant evidences given by our Lord respecting His Second Presence is contained in the words: "And there shall be . . . upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring." (Luke 21:25.) This evidence has been manifest for more than forty years, but in a very special sense since the summer of 1914. Over a quarter of a century ago, the following interesting comment was made on these words of Christ:

**"The roaring sea and waves symbolize the restless masses of humanity, curbed, but not fully restrained by the laws and regulations of society. Every one has heard some of this 'roaring' for the past twenty years, with occasional stormy outbreaks dashing like tidalwaves against the earth (social order) and seeking to swallow it up. Restrained for a time, these waves are gathering weight and force; and, as prophetically shown, it is only a question of a few years until all the mountains (kingdoms) are 'removed and carried into the midst of the sea,' in anarchy. (Psa. 46:1, 2.) Every newspaper not under the control of wealth, voices the roar of the restless 'sea' class; and the others, though unwillingly, must give the echo of the roaring as matters of news."--Studies, Vol. IV, pp. 596, 597.**

**"In answer to the question of the disciples about signs and evidences of His Second Presence, our Lord taught that neither the world nor the unfaithful servants would be aware of it, until the intense fire of trouble is at least commenced. And the faithful evidently will see Him present merely by the eye of faith -- through the Scriptures written aforetime for their learning, to be apprehended as they become due. Present truths on every subject are parts of 'His goods' and treasures new and old which our Lord had laid up for us and now freely gives us. (Matt. 24: 45 47.) ... It [His Presence] will be manifested as foretold, by the dawning light of truth-truth on every subject, as we now see it so rapidly and gloriously unfolding. A few years more, and the Sun of Righteousness will have fully risen with healing in its beams to bless and raise up the death-stricken world."--Studies, Vol. II, pp. 164, 165.**

### **SOME FORMER INFERENCES NOT SUSTAINED**

Some are disposed to inquire if the discovery that we should begin to reckon the 2,520 years from the beginning of Judah's *servitude* to Babylon, in the third year of Jehoiakim, 606 B.C., does not disarrange or destroy what we understand were remarkable "time" parallels. Does it not require that we give up the thought that we are living in the days of the Second Presence? Our reply to this is: The prophetic periods already noted and explained are based upon clear, definite statements of Scripture; in other words, they are given in connection with the beginning and ending of certain remarkable events fulfilling definite predictions, and they have served the purpose Divinely intended, to cause the "watchers" to look for the *events* that give evidence of the Second Presence. These chronological predictions, with the exception of one, have run their course. The one exception is that relating to the *full* end of the Gentile kingdoms and the *full* return of favor to Israel. This is due to reach its fulfilment in only a few years from the present.

The two time parallels that made the Gospel Age and its Harvest the same length as the Jewish Age and its Harvest, were not based on any statements of Scripture, but were, rather, purely inferential. The



lapse of time has proved that this inference was not well founded. In an article entitled "The Harvest Is Not Ended," published in September, 1916, about two months before his death, PASTOR RUSSELL said: "Our expectations must not be allowed to weigh anything as against the facts. The fact is that the Harvest Work is going grandly on; it is not ended by any means." In the same article, he makes the statement that the *time* feature of the Harvest was based upon inference, and that he no longer held it. We quote his words:

"Our readers will remember that the basis of our expectations respecting the Harvest *time* was the parallelism between the closing of the Jewish Age and the closing of the Gospel Age. . . . Our mistake was along the very line that we pointed out. Time and again, we reminded our readers that the parallelism between the Jewish Age and the Gospel Age could not include anything belonging to the New Dispensation. The parallels affected merely the nominal Jewish house *there* and the nominal Christian house *here*.

. . . We should not have looked for parallelisms between the starting of the Gospel Church and its experiences, and the starting in this Harvest time of the Heavenly Church and its experiences. These are no part of the parallel. The parallel belongs to the nominal Jewish system, which went to destruction [in the year

70 A.D.], and the nominal Gospel Church, which is now [1916] *going* [not gone] to destruction.

"We *imagined* that the Harvest work of gathering the Church would be accomplished before the end of the Gentile Times [or as expressed by him at other times--the Gentile lease of Power] ; but nothing in the Bible so said. Our thought was purely an *inference*, and now we see that it was an unjustified one."-- Z'16-263, 264.

Six years have passed since these words were published. The nominal systems are still existing. The Harvest work is still going on. Is it not apparent, if we believe PASTOR RUSSELL, that the "*time*" parallel of the Harvest, both as relating to the gathering of the true Church and the destruction of the nominal systems, has failed? We therefore are compelled to give up both, as well as to give up every feature that is related to these supposed parallels. 'this is so for two reasons; one of which is that if the Harvest began in 1874, it has already lasted forty-eight years. As PASTOR RUSSELL said in September, 1916: "The *fact* is that the Harvest Work is going grandly on: it is not ended by any means. . . . We may expect that quite a good many will yet be gathered to the Heavenly Garner, and we know of no time-limit here." The other reason is that it is a *fact* that the complete downfall of Christendom, which was the *event* that corresponded with the supposed *time* feature of the type, did not occur, either in 1914 or 1918. That supposed time feature was A.D. 70, when Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed. Christendom is not yet overthrown. "Our expectations must not be allowed to weigh anything as against the facts."

**What is true of the "time" parallel of the Harvest, is also true of the "time" parallel of the length of the Jewish and Gospel Ages. The lapse of time has proved that this also must be given up for the reason, as taught by the Savior, that the Harvest time includes, not only the gathering into the Heavenly Garner, but the burning of the "tares" as well, or in other words, the ending of all false professions of Christ, when the systems go down. PASTOR RUSSELL'S understanding of this matter is precisely as thus stated, as we**

read: "This coming trouble and *overthrow* . . . had its parallel in the destruction of Jerusalem and the complete overthrow of the Jewish polity, A.D. 70."--*Studies, Vol. III, p. 126.*

### **"BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS"**

We now consider more particularly, more definitely, the evidences that are given by our Lord Himself, that prove most conclusively that we have for some years been living in the days of the invisible, personal Presence of the Divine Christ. In examining these evidences, we discover that the most important, the most striking, the most significant, indeed the most convincing of all, is that when that time would be reached, there would be a most wonderful and clear unfolding of the Divine Plan of human salvation and redemption. This is implied in at least three very striking utterances of Christ, two of them made before His death, and one some half century or more after His resurrection. The first that we will examine is found in Luke 12:35-37, and reads: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Can anything be more plainly taught than that these words of our Savior have reference to His Second Advent? Can it be more clearly stated that after His Second Advent has taken place, He will make the fact known by what is figuratively described as "knocking" ? This can refer to nothing else than the fulfilling Of the "sure word of prophecy, the light in: the dark place until the day dawn." To such as are watching for His return and giving heed to the symbolical knock, He will gird Himself as a servant and serve them. We cannot see how anything different from this can be understood by these words.

The next utterance of our Lord bearing on this matter is found in Matthew 24:45-47, and is indeed a part of His reply to the question, "What shall be the sign [evidence] of Thy presence and of the consummation of the Age?" The words are: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods." In commenting on these words of our Lord, we believe we cannot do better than quote the brief but comprehensive comment of PASTOR RUSSELL, written some thirty years ago:

"The closing verses of Matt. 24, from verse 42 on, are very significant. In verse 37 our Lord had shown that the world would not know of the Parousia of the Son of man; and now He cautions His professed disciples that, unless on their guard, they will be similarly in darkness relative to His Parousia. He says, 'Watch , therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come [*erchomai--arrive*].' If people were expecting a thief at a definite time, they would stay awake so as not to be taken unawares: so you should be ever awake, always ready, and always watching for the first *evidence* of My *Parousia*. In reply to your question, 'When shall these things be?' I merely tell you to watch and be ready, and when I arrive, when I am *present*, I will communicate the fact to all who are watching and faithful, and they only will have any right to know. All others should and must be in outer darkness, and must learn *with* and as the world--through trouble.

"Who, *then* [in the 'Harvest'], is a faithful and wise servant whom his master shall make ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed that servant whom his master on coming [*erchomai*--when he *arrives*] shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods'--*all the vast storehouse of Precious truth shall be opened to such faithful servants, to arm and supply and feed the entire household of faith.*

**"But if the servant's heart is not right, he will say, My master tarryes (*has not arrived*), and may smite (oppose and contradict) his fellow servants (those who differ with him; those, therefore, who are declaring the opposite--My Lord does not tarry, but *has come, is present*)."**--*Studies, Vol. II, p. 163.*

### **"OH, THE BLESSEDNESS OF HIM THAT WAITETH"**

In connection with these utterances that declare a special serving of "meat in due season" by our Lord Himself, when He should come and be present, we have one which we have already mentioned, and which is associated with a chronological statement. It is found in Daniel 12:12 and is associated with two other chronological periods. A definite promise is given in connection with these, that the "wise" of God's people would be given an understanding of them in a due time. The particular one referred to reads: "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." The words were addressed to Daniel. However, they were not understood by him, but were specially for those who would be living in the "time of the end," more particularly those of the faithful watchers, after the days (years) had ended. Concerning the importance of this chronological period, as it bears on the matter of locating the Second Presence of our Lord, the words of PASTOR RUSSELL, published about two months before his death, are certainly very significant now. They are significant because of the fact that they express his convictions after discovering his mistake concerning the parallel "time" features of the Harvest of the Gospel Age. His words are:

*"We found the beginning of the Harvest time clearly marked by the 1,335 days of prophecy, and by the fulfilment amongst God's people of the declaration: 'Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh to the end of the 1,335 days!' (Dart. 12:12.) Surely great blessedness, great enlightenment of the eyes of understanding, great appreciation of our God and His glorious purposes came [we would say, began to come] to the Lord's people at that time, in full agreement with that prophecy! Ever since then a new song has been in the mouths of the Lord's people, as they have learned of His goodness through the Divine Plan of the Ages. We see no reason to question the date October, 1874, as the beginning of the Harvest time and the parallel to the time when Jesus began His ministry in the Harvest time of the Jewish Age."*

Two important matters are emphasized in this utterance. The first one is that he found the beginning of the Harvest time, which, of course, locates the date of the Second Advent, clearly marked by the ending of the 1,335 days of prophecy. The second is the beginning of the fulfilment of the prediction, "Oh, the blessedness," etc. in the wonderful unfolding of the Divine Plan.

Another evidence that we have since that time been living in the days of the Second Presence of Christ is, as is very generally believed amongst the Lord's consecrated, that we are now witnessing the fulfilment of every feature described by our Lord as characterizing the Laodicean period. This we all

know was not only PASTOR RUSSELL'S understanding, but also that of many other expositors of the Revelation. The most important, significant matter contained in the epistle to the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans is that the Lord is represented as *present*, knocking at the door of individual hearts. Those who heed the symbolical knock are represented as partaking of a feast with Him. Who that has partaken of the blessed feast--the knowledge of the Divine Plan of the Ages can doubt for a moment the fact that our Lord has come, and has girded Himself, and has been and is serving His faithful flock?

### **GOD SHALL HELP HER**

Another remarkable prediction bearing on this same evidence is that contained in the wonderful prophecy, the forty-sixth Psalm. The Psalm first describes the same troublous times, already mentioned as given by our Savior, in reply to the question, "What shall be the evidence of Thy presence?"--that there should be on the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, etc. The words of the Psalm we call special attention to are: "God is in the midst of her [the Church]; she shall not be moved: God shall help her in the dawn of her morning." (V. 6.) Who can doubt that we are living in the dawn of the Church's morning; that the help has come, as He promised, the help being the meat in due season, the knowledge of the Divine Plan, the knowledge that the Kingdom is very near.

A little while; now He has come;

The hour draws on apace

The blessed hour, the glorious morn,

When we shall see His face."

Quoting again PASTOR RUSSELL on the subject of Christ's Presence, we find that he regarded the grand display of truth in these last days as a most convincing evidence that our Lord was present. The words were written November 1, 1914:

"Our Lord indicated that at His Second Coming all His servants who would be in the right condition of heart, would hear His knock; and that if they would open to Him immediately, He would come in and sup with them. What does this statement signify? It means that His knock showed that the time for the great Representative of God--our glorified Lord--to be here had come; and that all who were ready would hear that knock, the prophetic knock, calling attention to the prophetic testimony that thenceforth we could look forward to Messiah's beginning His Parousia, His Harvest Work, at once with all denominations. When the year 1875 came, was everything accomplished within twenty-four hours? Surely not! Did everybody awake at the same minute? Have they not been getting awake all through the Harvest time? And some of us have not been awake very long. . . What has occurred during this time? We have had [and are having, according to his words in 1916] a Harvest period, and the work of the Harvest has been going on silently, gradually. The Lord has been judging amongst His people, just as He said He would. . . Look back now and see how the Lord's promises have been fulfilled--how during this time of Harvest it has been, as He said it would be, a blessed time. Listen to the words of the Prophet concerning the time since 1875, and note how his prophecy *has been fulfilled*: 'Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days'-the blessedness of those who have been living from 1875 onward. What blessings have we received? just as

the Bible has said to us, so has it been. Those who open their hearts to the Lord find that He not only comes in and sups with them, but that He becomes their servant, comforts them, and serves them with 'meat in due season.' This accounts for all these blessed truths upon which we have been feasting since we have entered into the light of Present Truth; and it proves that this Divine Plan of the Ages is not from any human being nor is it a human plan or scheme; for no human being is capable of bringing such glorious "things out of the Word of God. . . .

*"All of the special blessings that we, as a company of Bible students, have received during the past forty years have been the result of the Lord's Presence. He has been our Servant and has been bringing forth things new and old out of His storehouse. These old things have been coming forth in a new way--not because of human ability or skill, but because it is the Lord's due time for these things to become clear--the doctrine of Redemption, the Ransom, the meaning of the term Body of Christ, the explanation of how the death of Christ is justification for our sins, the imputation of His merit for the Church, the giving of the merit to the world, what the sanctification of the Church really means, the begetting of the Holy Spirit, the begotten ones becoming New Creatures in Christ, and what this term, a New Creature, signifies, how the New Creature differs from the old creature, how the First Resurrection is to bring this New Creation glorious privileges and Divine blessing--glory, honor and immortality.*

"Our Lord, present, but invisible, has brought us light along every feature of the Divine Plan, not only respecting those things that were old--justification, sanctification and redemption--but also respecting the philosophy of God's dealings--how our Lord became flesh and dwelt among us, how He was holy, harmless and undefiled, and yet was born of an earthly mother. All these things which were once confusing to us, but which are now brought to light, ARE EVIDENCES THAT THE LORD IS HERE SERVING HIS PEOPLE. We *know* that we have *received* these things. We do not believe that we have received them from any human tongue or pen, but from the Lord, who is giving us 'meat in due season.'

"

## **THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**--OCTOBER 1--LUKE I**

**Golden Text.--"He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink."--Luke 1:15**

OUR Berean Study course for the next six month; has been mapped out by the International Committee. It constitutes a very thorough investigation of our Lord's earthly life, from His birth to His ascension, and is based on the Gospel of St. Luke.

Today's study very appropriately calls for investigation of God's dealings and promises up to the birth of John the Baptist, the Redeemer's forerunner and herald. In considering this familiar narrative we are reminded of the Lord's great care in preparing His chosen instruments for the various parts of His great work. Abraham's life was a long discipline of faith and patience; for he was to be the father of the

faithful, a type of the fatherhood of God, and a worthy example to all his children, both those under the Law and those under the covenant of grace.--Rom. 4:11-17.

Moses was specially prepared to be a leader, lawgiver and judge to Israel. Born under the humiliating conditions of bondage and the imperial sentence of death, he was providentially protected, preserved and adopted into the royal family, where he received a measure of that education necessary for his future service; and after that he had forty years more in the retirement of domestic life, which, under the operations of Divine grace, hardened his virtues and mellowed the ardor of his temperament. Thus God gave to Israel a trained and experienced character as a leader. Similarly, suitable preparation for the positions they were to occupy or the work they were to do is very noticeable in other cases, both of Bible record and of subsequent history. Mark the case of Samuel, a child of prayer, devoted to the Lord from his infancy, and trained in the service of the Lord under the care of Eli; and of St. Paul, called from his infancy, instructed in the Law, and zealous toward God even while ignorantly persecuting the saints, verily thinking he did God service.

John the Baptist was another illustration. The preparations in this, as in most of these cases, began before he was born, in the hearts of his parents--"They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (V. 6.) Consider also subsequent reformers known to all through the pages of history, and mark the providential leadings in their preparation for their work long before they could have any knowledge of the work that was before them. Consider also how the Lord has been preparing the Gospel Church for its Millennial work; and how He prepared the Ancient Worthies for their Millennial work in the earthly phase of the coming Kingdom; and so on through all the list of His "chosen vessels." The "*chosen vessel*" is always a *prepared vessel* for the service intended; and that the preparation is of God, and not of himself, is manifest from the fact that in every case it began long before the chosen one knew of the ends to be accomplished or the significance of the providential circumstances or the measures of discipline,

### **HOLINESS OF HEART ESSENTIAL**

The principal preparation which God requires for every part of His honorable service is holiness of heart --devotedness to God and to His righteousness and truth, and abhorrence of all that is unholy, unclean. "Be ye *clean* that bear the vessels of the Lord." There are, however, some parts of the Lord's service which reflect no honor upon those engaged in it though they do reflect honor upon the wisdom and power of God, who is able to make even the wrath of His enemies to praise Him, by His power to out-general and overrule their evil for good to His cause. For instance, Satan, and every other evil worker, whose evil devices are, by Divine power, overruled of God, for good, unwittingly serve some of the purposes of God--sometimes for the discipline of the children of God and sometimes for the revolutionizing of affairs in the world.

The prenatal influences upon John the Baptist were such that, from his birth, his heart was inclined toward God and holiness (v. 15); and the training and discipline of his life were such that at maturity he was ready for the work of introducing to Israel the long-promised Messiah. Of him it was foretold, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord." Yes, he was a great man, a great preacher and a great prophet. Jesus said he was the greatest of all the Prophets. (Matt. 11:11.) But he was not great in the eyes of



men. He was never a guest at the palace of Herod, but he was, a prisoner in his prisons. He was not an esteemed orator in the Jewish synagogues, but he was "a voice crying in the wilderness." He was not arrayed in purple and fine linen, nor did he fare sumptuously every day, but his raiment was of camel's hair and a leathern girdle, and his meat was locusts and wild honey. And though, for a time, the multitudes were attracted by his preaching, he was soon abandoned by the people, imprisoned by the king, and finally beheaded in prison.

And yet John was truly a great man; for he was "great in the sight of the Lord." He was great in the sense that he that ruleth his own spirit according to the principles and precepts of the Divine Word is greater than he that taketh a city. (Prov. 16:32.) All the natural aspirations and human ambitions were made subservient to his one mission of introducing his cousin, Jesus of Nazareth, a man of humble birth and circumstances, as the Messiah, to whom he knew the gathering of the people would be after he had accomplished his mission of introducing Him. (Gen. 49:10.) But John was pleased to have it so, and declared that in performing this service for his cousin according to the flesh, and thus accomplishing his part in the Divine purpose and prophecy, his joy was fulfilled. (John 3:29.) And, by the eye of faith discerning in the humble Nazarene the Son of God, he said to the people, "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" "He must increase, but I must decrease."--Luke 3:16; John 1:29; 3:30.

### **TRUE GREATNESS IN HUMILITY**

It was this meekness, this complete self-abnegation and singleness of purpose to accomplish the righteous will of God, that constituted the moral greatness of John. And because he was in that attitude of heart where the Lord could use him he was privileged to be the greatest, the most highly honored, of all the Prophets, in that he was chosen to introduce, to Israel and the world, the Anointed Son of God, the Redeemer and future King of the whole earth. Thus he became a great man, .a great preacher of righteousness and truth, the greatest of all the Prophets, and one of the heirs of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God.

What a profitable lesson is in this for all who would seek true greatness--to be "great in the sight of the Lord." It calls to mind that wise admonition of the Apostle, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5:6.) The way of the cross, the way of humiliation and self-abasement, is the way to the crown, to that true honor that cometh from God only. Where now is the honor of the great ones of earth who have passed away--the Caesars, the Herods, the Alexanders and Napoleons; the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees and doctors of the Law and Rabbis? and where all the reverend Popes and Cardinals and Bishops and Priests of the great Apostasy who proudly flourished in their day? They have all come to naught, and in the Millennial judgment they will come forth to shame and confusion of face, stripped of all their honors. But those truly great ones--"great in the sight of the Lord"--are reserved unto honor and glory and power at the appearing and Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Let the lesson come home to each of our hearts--"He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Patiently submit to the humbling now, and hopefully and joyfully wait for the glory to be revealed by and by in all the faithful. This is not the time nor place for rewards, but for



discipline and service, for the development of character, for making ready, for the future exaltation, that we may appear without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, joint-heirs of our Redeemer.

Of John the Baptist Jesus declared, "Verily I say unto you, of those born of women there hath not risen a greater Prophet than John the Baptist; and yet I say unto You that the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he." (Luke 7:28.) These words are valuable as showing us that John was the last of the Prophets announcing the coming of Messiah and the beginning of the great work of selecting from amongst sinners a loyal class, to be associates with the Redeemer in His Messianic Kingdom and glory. John could not be of the Kingdom class. His grand work terminated before the Redeemer's sacrifice was finished--before Pentecostal blessings came accepting some as joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom, John himself seemed to understand this, for he declared, "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom," but I am the Bridegroom's friend and rejoice to hear His voice.--John 3:29.

### **THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS**

St. Peter distinctly tells us respecting the Old Testament Prophets, that "Holy men of old spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." He intimates that frequently they uttered deeper and broader truths than they themselves comprehended--truths which only the future would fully reveal. This is true of the prophecy of Zacharias, in this lesson. Verses 68-70 constitute the first division of this prophecy; praise to God, the Fountain of every good and perfect gift, comes first. To Him all honor and praise are to be given for the fulfilment of His gracious promises of old, "for He hath visited and brought redemption to His people; He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David," in harmony with the promises. Here, after the usual manner of prophecies, the thing about to be accomplished is spoken of as though it had been done.

As John the Baptist was born but six months before Jesus, it follows that the begetting of Jesus had already taken place at the time of this prophecy. The Holy Spirit spoke of the things begun, but not yet accomplished, as though finished: "He hath visited and brought redemption for His people." This word *redemption* applies not only to the redeeming work accomplished by Jesus in the consecration of His life at baptism and down to the completion of His sacrifice at Calvary, but it is comprehensive enough to take in (the entire work of reclaiming humanity).

A small section of our race, the "elect," is being reclaimed during this Gospel Age; but the Scriptures assure us that the Messianic reign of a thousand years will all be for the purpose of redeeming or bringing back from the power of sin and death Adam and so many of his children as shall be willing to accept the Divine favor, when brought to their knowledge. The import, therefore, of this first strophe or section of the poetic prophecy is, The Lord be praised that the time has come beginning the great blessing which He long ago promised.

### **DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES**

The second section or strophe of this prophetic poem runs from verse 71 to 75. It relates to the deliverance of God's people from the power of their enemies. One important thought here is that none but God's people will ever be delivered from the enemies here referred to. However, there have been many in the past, as there are at present, enemies through wicked works--not because of intentional wickedness, but because blinded by the god of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the weaknesses of their fallen flesh, etc.

St. Paul tells us about the enemies from whom ultimately all of God's people shall be delivered. Satan is an enemy. He shall be bound for a thousand years and ultimately shall be destroyed. Sin is an enemy, which will be stamped out in its various phases during Messiah's Kingdom. And we read, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"--and with it will go the tomb. Adamic death will be no more. None will be under its power. The resurrection power will release all. Only those who sin wilfully, deliberately, will die the Second Death, which is not an enemy.

### **THE PREPARATORY WORK**

The third section or strophe of this prophetic poem tells us of a work to be accomplished before the grand consummation of the destruction of all enemies and the lifting up of all accounted worthy to be sons of God. This is recorded in verses 76-79. It tells how John the Baptist would be the forerunner of the Lord's special Servant, Jesus, to pave the way for His great work. That great work would be to give the knowledge of salvation to thousands who were already God's people, to show them the "high calling" of this present Age. Thus in God's tender mercy the Church sees and is enlightened by the "Morning Star" or "Day Star" before the Sun of Righteousness arises to scatter the darkness of mankind during Messiah's reign. This lesser light of the present time shines into the hearts of believers with sanctifying power and sets them afire with zeal for the Truth. They in turn shine forth upon those who are sitting in the shadow of death. This "Day Star" guides the feet of the saints in the way of peace, even while still in the time of trouble and before the New Dispensation is ushered in.

## **THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS**

**--OCTOBER 8--LUKE 2:40-50--**

*Golden Text.--"And Jesus advanced in wisdom  
and stature and in favor with God and man."--Luke 2:52*

IT is with a sense of deep reverence that we now take up the study of the life of our Savior--He who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. The study of such a life should be a profitable one. The more we know our dear Redeemer in the light of the Scriptures, the more we shall appreciate Him, love Him, and seek to copy Him. No other life than His could bear so continual and close a scrutiny, yet always be full of fresh revelations of moral dignity and character, of loftiness and elevation of soul, of greatness of mind, of nobility and magnanimity--any other life similarly studied and criticized would reveal its seamy side of weakness, sin, selfishness, and ignobility.

Let us then as we pursue the study, note diligently the spirit that actuated our Lord, the motives that influenced Him, and the principles that governed His life; that having these in our minds and in our hearts, we may the more successfully exemplify them in our lives. By so doing, the study of our Lord's life will be one of profit to us.

### **THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM**

Noting the little incidentals by which Divine providence prepared for our Savior's birth and for the sending forth of the Gospel Message, is strengthening to the faith of the Lord's people. Realizing God's care in the past over even the little things, gives a foundation for confidence in His wisdom and provision for the features of His Plan which are yet future--the fulfilment of all the exceeding great and precious promises which centered in Him who was born in Bethlehem.

The same decree that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem brought many others of the numerous family of David, and as the inns or hotels of that time were comparatively limited in numbers and in capacity, it is not surprising that the inn proper was full of guests when Joseph and Mary arrived. Indeed, it was rather the custom for many travelers to carry with them their own lodging outfit, and to provide for their own conveniences in the courtyard connected with the inns. And hence the experiences of Joseph and Mary were by no means exceptional. When therefore the Babe Jesus was born, a manger became His most convenient cradle.

However, to us the center of interest is not the holy ground on which our Savior trod, nor the holy manger in which He lay as a babe, nor His holy mother; yea, though we reverence His flesh, and are deeply interested in all that pertains thereto, especially in all its experiences, from the time of his consecration to death, at baptism; nevertheless, our still greater interest is in our risen Lord, the new creature perfected, the spiritual One, far above manhood, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named--next to the Father, and exalted to His right hand of power. The Apostle voices this sentiment well, saying, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him [so] no more" our knowledge of Him as the risen and glorified Lord and Savior thoroughly outshines all of our interest in His earthly life. (2 Cor. 5: 16.) And yet His earthly life is interesting and profitable to us, as we have seen and shall see.

Much peculiar speculation has been indulged in respecting the childhood, boyhood and young manhood of our Lord Jesus, with which we have no sympathy whatever. The Bible student should confine himself to the Bible record, and not give loose rein to imagination and speculation more likely to be untrue than correct. Had the Lord foreseen necessity for information respecting this period of our Savior's career He undoubtedly would have provided for it in the inspired record. This does not imply that there was nothing noteworthy or commendable in our Lord's earlier life, but rather that by comparatively ignoring this the Lord would point us more particularly to the three and a half years of public ministry following His baptism in Jordan, and by the Holy Spirit. In a word, the Lord thus points out that it was not the *man* Jesus whose words and acts were valuable to us and lessons for our emulation, but the words and acts of *Christ* Jesus, the *Anointed* Jesus--Jesus after He had been anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure. Nevertheless, keeping strictly within the lines of the little that is

written in the Scriptures we may draw some valuable and helpful lessons from the boyhood and young manhood of our Master.

### **THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT**

Nothing is known respecting the first twelve years of our Lord's life, except that under Divine direction His mother and foster-father took Him down into Egypt, out of the reach of Herod, where they remained with Him for a few months until after Herod's death, returning then to their home city, Nazareth in Galilee. It will be remembered that the occasion of the flight into Egypt was Herod's fear that a king should arise in the family of David, in harmony with the Jewish traditions, and that thus Herod's own family would be ousted from the kingly position. Herod was not of the family of David, nor a Jew at all--he was of the family of Esau, Jacob's brother. The story of the wise men coming from the East seeking a new-born king of the Jews will be remembered, and of how Herod, learning of their mission, urged that when they had found the infant they sought they should inform him, Herod feigning that he also desired to do homage to the new king. But the wise men, under Divine direction, ignored Herod's request. Subsequently, learning some of the particulars respecting the birth at Bethlehem, Herod caused the death of the male children of that city of two years old and under--thus endeavoring to insure the death of the new-born king. It is probable that the number of babes slaughtered under this decree was not great; as the population of Bethlehem was small, the number of male children of such an age would necessarily be few.

The Golden Text informs us that Jesus grew like any other boy--that His development was gradual, both as respects physical and intellectual stature. We are not, therefore, to think of Jesus in boyhood's days as a sage, a teacher, a healer, etc., as we find Him subsequent to His anointing with the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, we may properly suppose that the *perfect* boy would in many respects be keener and brighter than the average boy who inherits sundry imperfections from the fall.

The testimony respecting Mary and Joseph leaves no doubt that they were pious people, and this is confirmed by the second verse of this lesson, which, informs us that it was their custom to go every year to the Feast of the Passover: this requirement of the Law was observed by the most devout Jews only. It is as unnecessary as it is improper for us to go beyond the Scriptural declarations on this subject, and to assume, as some do, that Mary herself was miraculously conceived and born free from sin. indeed, if we had no record testifying to Mary's piety, the fact that she was honored by the Lord above all other women, in that she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus according to the flesh, would prove her nobility of character and purity of heart; for it is not even supposable that the Lord would so specially honor, bless and use any other than a noble character. Whom the Lord uses we may safely esteem honorable.

### **LESSON FOR GODLY PARENTS**

Although the Jewish Law does not so stipulate, tradition informs us that it was the custom to consider every boy who had fulfilled his twelfth year as "a Son of the Law," and to a certain extent from that age amenable to the requirements of the Law: and the narrative of our lesson seems to confirm this

tradition, telling us that when Jesus was twelve years of age (in His thirteenth year) He accompanied the family to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. Is there not a lesson here for all godly parents, suggesting that the training of the infancy period should be of such a character as to prepare the child for the consideration of sober and religious matters at the very threshold of boyhood? We think there is. And we think it a serious mistake by some well-intentioned parents when they conclude that their children of twelve years have sufficient mind to have grasped the elementary principles of a secular education and to be prepared for higher studies of a secular character, but unfit for higher religious studies. The children who are ready at that age for higher secular studies have already been carefully instructed along elementary lines; and if any are unprepared for higher studies in religious matters it is at least possible that their elementary religious training may have been neglected by their Divinely appointed instructors--their parents. No Christian parent can avoid this, his natural responsibility toward his children--in moral and religious training as well as in the secular and physical.

The Feast of the Passover continued seven days, but it was the custom for many of the pilgrims from distant parts to remain over only two days, until after the principal ceremonies. It is probable that Joseph and Mary, in company with their kinsfolk, started on the return journey on the third day of the feast. It was customary for the women of a caravan to move on ahead, the men coming after, and a boy of Jesus' age might be with either of the parents and not be missed until nightfall; and so it seems to have been in this case. As one day had been spent in the journey, so another day was spent in returning, and a third day in searching throughout the city; finally they found Jesus in the Temple, sitting with the teachers of the Law, the "Doctors." This was not so unusual as might at first appear; for at that time information was gained less from books and more from oral teaching, and the Doctors of the Law were supposed to be ready to instruct all who desired information, especially during the holy Passover week. Many young men availed themselves of such opportunities, and the custom seems to have been for the Doctors to sit on a special semi-circle of seats, while before them were low benches for the older students: the younger boys sat on the ground, literally "at their feet." Thus Paul, as a youth, was a pupil to Gamaliel, or, as the record reads, "sat at the feet of Gamaliel," to learn of him. Gamaliel was one of the chief Doctors of the Law in his day.

We are not to understand that the boy Jesus was bold, and that He went before the learned men of His day to denounce them as ignorant and as incapable teachers, and to show Himself off, as some precocious but ill-trained youth of today might attempt to do. On the contrary, we are to suppose the boy Jesus to have had a well-balanced mind, which probably recognized the fact that He had lived but few years in the world and had comparatively small experience in life, and that He by no means knew all, but recognized many questions upon which He would like to have further information, and that He asked His questions honestly, with a desire and hope of obtaining satisfactory answers from the teachers who "sat in Moses' seat."

The nature of the questions is not stated, but the time and surroundings would seem to indicate that they were of a religious character, and that the mind of Jesus was already grappling with the great questions which properly belonged to Him as a member of the Jewish race to which God had made certain great and precious promises as the Seed of Abraham--promises of Divine blessing under Messiah, of exaltation to be the chief nation of the world, and of the subsequent privilege of blessing all nations and of being the mediaries through whom all mankind might be brought to the knowledge of God and to His service. From what we know of the operations of our own minds at the age mentioned, we may presume that Jesus was brimful of questions respecting the hopes of Israel, and no doubt from His mother He had received some intimation at least that Divine providence

had indicated that He Himself was to bear some important part in connection with the fulfilment of the Scriptures; and He was seeking to know the part marked out for Him by the Heavenly Father in the testimony of the Law and the Prophets.

Although He did not have a Bible in His house, that He could consult respecting the Divine testimony, He did have the common privilege of the youth of His day of attending meetings in the one little synagogue of Nazareth, which was but a small country town. There, from Sabbath to Sabbath, He heard the Law read and to some extent commented upon, sometimes also the Psalms and prophecies. With these sources of information the eager mind of the boy had grappled, and now, on the occasion of this visit to the great city of Jerusalem, nothing attracted Him so much as the Temple and its symbolical services, and happening upon a court or chamber in which the great questions of the Law and the Prophets were being discussed by the ablest teachers of the time, Jesus became so deeply interested and enthused in the Bible study that seemingly He forgot all earthly things, so intent was He in studying about the Heavenly Father's business--the Plan of God, in which He Himself was to be so principal an actor.

### **"ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS"**

The narrative records that, when found by Joseph and Mary, Jesus was both *hearing* the Doctors and *asking* them questions. Naturally they were astonished to find their little son in the company of and receiving consideration from the greatest teachers of their day, and probably nothing was said to Jesus publicly respecting their disappointment and their subsequent search for Him: probably when alone Mary upbraided Him for His neglect to be with the caravan; yet she did this in a very kind and moderate manner, which seemed to indicate that it was a very unusual occurrence, which in turn speaks to us of parental obedience on the part of Jesus.

Mary's expression, "Behold, *thy father* and I have sought thee sorrowing," has been questioned by some as being a confession that Joseph was the *father* of Jesus, but we answer,--Not so; it would be unreasonable to suppose (1) that Luke would particularly trace the genealogy of Jesus through Mary, and ignore Joseph, and subsequently imply that Joseph was the father of Jesus; (2) Joseph having accepted Mary, accepted also her son, Jesus, and became His foster-father, and under just such circumstances today the child would be taught to consider such an one a parent, and to call him "father." (3) It is not at all probable that the story of the immaculate conception of Jesus was ever made known to any but the closest members of the family, and it is highly improbable that the subject had ever been discussed with the boy Jesus, only twelve years of age--nor would it have been proper to do so. Mary's language, therefore, is entirely consistent with all the facts set forth in the Gospel narrative.

Quite possibly the mind of the boy Jesus, while investigating the subject of His own responsibilities toward the Heavenly Father and His Plan, had wondered whether or not His mission might not in some degree begin with His thirteenth year, since at that time He was recognized as a "son of the Law." Quite possibly some of His questions before the Doctors of the Law were along this line, and quite probably He had finally about reached the conclusion that the types of the priestly office indicated clearly that His mission would not begin until He was thirty years of age. His reply to Mary's chiding was along this line: Did you not expect Me to be about My Father's business? Did you not know that I had reached

the age when I am a "son of the Law," and that therefore certain responsibilities have come upon Me in respect to the Heavenly Father and His Word and His Plan? And then, as though remembering the conclusion that He had just reached in discussing the subject with the Doctors, He broke off the conversation, yielded Himself to their wishes, and accompanied them to Nazareth, making (so far as recorded) no further suggestion of any other than the ordinary course of life until He had attained the age of thirty years. This is expressed in the words, "And He was *subject* unto them." Joseph and Mary realized clearly that the boy was more than ordinary, very extraordinary indeed, yet they did not fully comprehend the situation nor fully grasp the import of His words. Nevertheless, Mary treasured this with the other peculiar testimonies respecting Him in her heart, and doubtless it was from her lips that Luke received the information contained in our lesson.

It is quite probable that the long period of eighteen years of our Lord's life, from the time of the incident of this lesson to the time of His baptism, was spent in the performance of the ordinary duties of life. What a thought this gives us with respect to our Lord's development of *patience*--patiently waiting until the Father's time should come and He should begin His ministry; patiently studying meantime, as best He could, to know more and more of the Father's will and Plan; patiently waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would enable Him to fully comprehend the situation and His own personal relationship to it. What a lesson there is here for all His followers, and every one of us may well realize the truth of the words, "Ye have need of patience," and again, "Let patience have her perfect work." And we gather the further thought that the most humble forms of labor are honorable when they are ours in harmony with God's providence.

Happily for us, we are not born under the Law nor under the limitations which hinder us from receiving the call and responding to it before thirty years of age. On the contrary, under the Covenant of *Grace* it is our privilege to present our bodies living sacrifices to the Lord's service at as early an age as our knowledge of Divine things and our enlightened judgments will permit. We, instead of waiting to grow to the fulness of stature mental and physical, are permitted to begin at once, as members of the Royal Priesthood, and to be growing at the same time we are serving. But let us not forget the necessity for growth--adding to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.--2 Pet. 1:5-8.

"In malice be ye *children*, but in understanding be ye *men*."--1 Cor. 14:20. 1

## **BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION**

STUDY CXLII--SEPTEMBER 1

**WITNESSES OF JESUS--REV. 20:4.**

(761) Cite from the Old Testament a parallel vision to that of our text and show how the two coincide. H '21-23.



(762) What is the significance of their "reigning with Christ" and how is this connected with the statement that "judgment was given them"? H '21-23.

(763) Is the expression "beheaded for the witness of Jesus" to be understood as symbolic or literal? Give the significance. H '21-23.

(764) What does the "worship of the Beast and his Image" signify? H '20-9, 57.

(765) Explain the significance of "receiving the mark on their foreheads and on their hand." H '20-59.

STUDY CXLIII-SEPTFM13ER 24.

### **EARTH'S COMING GLORY--REV. 20:4.**

(766) Are there other texts corroborating this one with respect to the period of the thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints? Show the harmony of the Scriptures on this point. H '21-24.

(767) Give Scriptures describing the conditions and circumstances somewhat in detail that will prevail throughout the thousand years. H '21-24.

(768) Show the connection or relation, if any, between the vision given to St. Paul (2 Cor. 12:1-14) and that of our text. H '21-24.

(769) At what period of time did Millennial conditions begin to be revealed to God's people? Show how this has been a gradual revealing. H '24-25,

(770) What was the thought of Pre-Millennialists of the nineteenth century regarding the thousand-year period, and what important feature did they fail to grasp? H '21-25.

## **GREETINGS FROM THE LONDON CONVENTION**

Dear Brethren in Christ:

At the Annual Meeting of the Bible Students in Great Britain, held on Monday, August 7th, the friends gathered in Convention were desirous of sending their love, through you, to all of like faith in the U.S.A.; and at the same time to express their thankfulness to the Lord for bringing them into contact with you through the medium of the HERALD, and also by the welcome visits into our midst of our dear Brothers Streeter and Hoskins.

We are to assure you that the brethren in Great Britain are conscious of their indebtedness to the friends in America for so kindly sparing these dear brethren to us once more, and also for providing the wherewithal necessary to make the visit possible. It was felt that such loving generosity gives evidence of the Master's spirit, so highly appreciated wherever found.

The message you kindly sent us from the friends present at your last Annual Meeting was read to the assembled brethren, who were glad to be assured of the prayers and sympathies of those friends in your country of like experience to their own. It is our privilege to assure you that the interests of the Lord's work in the U.S.A. are ever remembered by the friends here, and our prayers for Zion's prosperity in every place co-mingle with your own.

It was felt that the conditions now prevailing in the world, and also the peculiar trials of God's people at this time appeared to indicate that the gathering to the Lord of His "Little Flock" called, chosen and faithful--was drawing appreciably nearer. The thought rejoiced the hearts of those for whom it meant the consummation of all their hopes, and the sum of all their expectations. To all thus favored, what joy will be their portion to meet each other face to face in the presence of the Lord.

Meantime we commend all of God's Elect to the Word of His. grace, which is able to edify, and by which alone can an inheritance in His Kingdom be gained. With sincere brotherly love to all,

Your brethren in Christ,

BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE.--*Eng.*

[We publish below a letter from our dear Brother Streeter to the Providence friends--his home Class. Though not written for publication, we feel sure all our readers will enjoy our Brother's message and rejoice with us in the evidence of the Lord's blessing upon the brethren and their ministry abroad.]

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Providence Class:

Having time to spare this morning, I am taking advantage of it to write you a few lines. You have doubtless heard of our pleasant trip across the sea, and of our safe arrival in England; of the precious fellowship Brother Hoskins and I enjoyed with dear Brother and Sister Read during the trip, and of the privilege given us by the head steward of the Steamship to address a gathering in the dining room of the vessel.

It is now, at this writing, nearly two weeks since we landed at Southampton. We arrived on Sunday at 5 P.M., too late to reach London in time to fill our first appointment there. We reached London about 8.30 P.M., and were met at the station by Brother Shearn. Here we separated from Brother and Sister Read, and Brother Hoskins and I were taken to Brother Shearn's home, where we met a very warm reception, and for nearly a week were entertained there.

The London Convention is now a thing of the past. It was a very precious, profitable and helpful gathering. Representatives from Australia, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Finland, Holland, and France were in attendance, all of whom the INSTITUTE had been in correspondence with. We got well acquainted with them all. Most all of them could speak English, although not fluently. In France some are just beginning to get awakened to the true situation of affairs, and have come out of bondage.

I shall have something to say when we arrive home concerning matters of interest to us all, in all these countries.

It was Brother Hoskins' privilege to speak twice at the Convention, and the same was true of myself. Brethren from Australia, Scotland, Ireland, etc., also gave addresses during the Convention. I spoke for about a half hour in the afternoon Sunday to candidates for water baptism, and gave to them in behalf of those assembled the right hand of fellowship. The candidates then went to another place and were immersed. We remained and gave a talk on consecration to about two or three hundred--an address of about an hour in length. Brother Hoskins gave a very excellent talk from the words of the Savior, "This is my commandment that ye love one another," on Monday evening. I gave the closing address of the Convention on Tuesday at 6:30, using the text: "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." The Convention closed with a Love Feast. We have been stopping in the home of Brother Guard since the Convention and gave a talk last night on "The Value of Trials," in Brother Guard's home. This service was attended by members of the Forest Gate Class, and was not part of my itinerary. We went down into the centre of London yesterday and met with the foreign brethren, discussing with them concerning their various needs, etc. We bade them all Good bye as they left us for their homes in the different countries.

A dear Brother Dell, who is in the employ of the Methodist Book and Tract Society guided us all over the premises of John and Charles Wesley. We saw their tomb. We were privileged to visit the Chapel where John Wesley preached over one hundred and fifty years ago. We stood in his pulpit. You can imagine our emotions as we thought of those far off days when Wesley preached those stirring discourses in that great revival of primitive piety, in those momentous times. We stood for a few minutes in

the room where he breathed his last moments. We went into the little room where he was wont to betake himself and spend time in prayer before he went to deliver his message to the Lord's people. We may be able to tell you more about this visit if the Lord spares us to meet with you all again.

We visited John Bunyan's tomb. All of these places are within a few minutes walk from each other. We go to Ealing (a district of London) to speak tonight.

We have thought much of you all in Providence--of your kindness. Our heart has turned in the direction of Providence many times since the Thursday and Sunday of our last meetings together. We have been many times encouraged as we remembered your prayers for us, as well as that you are now praying for us. I see, in my mind, all your dear faces. I think we learn to appreciate our privileges more when we become for a time separated. May the dear Lord bless you all for your many kindnesses to me. I love you all dearly. May we all be very diligent and faithful in doing the dear Master's will and bidding. May we appreciate more and more our

Calling in Christ Jesus. May we more and more endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. May we prize our liberty in Christ. May we indeed, all of its love one another with a pure heart fervently.

I am feeling very well indeed--not too tired. As you doubtless know, we attend in September a Convention in Glasgow, also visit Edinburgh, Dundee, and Arbroath in Scotland, also Belfast and a few other places in the north of Ireland.

Trusting that this will find you all enjoying God's favor and blessing, and praying that grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, may be with you, I close this letter, trusting if it be His will to meet you all soon again. With Christian love to each one of you, I remain,

Yours in Christian bonds, R. E. STREETER